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# LAND CATECHISM.

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## IS RENT JUST ?

WHAT POLITICAL ECONOMY TEACHES REGARDING IT.

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By WILLIAM BROWN.

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Human wishes should not trouble the divine order.—DOMAT.

The law does not create right ; right must dictate the law.—LAVELEYE.

A just weight and balance are the Lord's : all the weights of the bag are his work.—PROVERBS OF SOLOMON.

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1881.

THE  
LAND CATECHISM

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IS RENT JUST?

WHAT POLITICAL ECONOMY TEACHES REGARDING IT

BY WILLIAM BROWN

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1801

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Workingmen who may read this volume can render important service by getting their fellow workmen in the factories, mills or shops to subscribe for copies.

All orders, remittances, etc., (the latter to be registered) to be addressed  
Wm. Brown, care of John Lovell & Son, Publishers, Montreal, Canada.

## INTRODUCTION.

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IN November last I sat down to the preparation of the following pages on the Land Question, and finished my task by the month of March. The momentous problems discussed having engaged my constant study for many years, they did not come before me as questions in which I had not previously taken any interest, neither had I to begin the search for new material. The series of papers thus produced appeared from week to week in an American Journal of great influence and large circulation, the New York "Irish World and Industrial Liberator." A large number of readers have accordingly had them through hand, and I am glad to say I have abundant testimony that they have been studied with deep solicitude and attention. That these great problems must now receive full and free discussion is the growing conviction of all thoughtful men. To the labor press, a press rapidly increasing, we are largely indebted that the long lost truths of Political Economy are being discussed and understood by millions of the working population. When a spirit of enquiry has been awakened as to questions affecting the welfare of the human race, men naturally turn to those sources of information where error finds no friend and truth no foe. One would think that even those who remain totally indifferent to the claims of labor, and in whose hearts the long and constant wail of human suffering rarely if ever finds an echo, must have the conviction at times forced upon their minds that there is, at the bottom of all this turmoil and unrest, really something which demands enquiry and investigation. As it is certain that we are all actors, one way or other, in the present scene of things, each leaving his impress, whatever that may be, on the world through which he is passing, so it is certain that every human being has an equal and pressing interest in a righteous settlement of those great industrial problems now challenging the attention of all. For it is man as man who is interested, not as he is rich or as he is poor, not as he belongs to this class or to that class.

I do not know of any medium of communication with the industrial classes which I could have chosen more suitable than the "Irish World"—perhaps, all things considered, I may say I know of none so suitable. Its sympathy with the toiling people is too well known to need any word of recognition from me. Its correspondents have of course all the advantage of its enormous and constantly increasing circulation. The paper has rooted itself in the affection of thousands, and this no doubt as much from the fact that it permits nothing to stand between the poorest toiler on earth and the interests of that toiler, as that it discusses living and practical problems of profoundest interest to us all with a freedom and fullness born of deep conviction and attachment to truth. The silly attempt to cry down truth because it happens to be unpopular, gets no sympathy in its pages. What

this powerful Journal has accomplished in its generous treatment of the claims of labor, and on behalf of suffering humanity, will only be fully known in the judgment of a future day.\* One hesitates to say which is its greatest praise, the hatred of its enemies or the admiration of its friends. And all this, I am glad to say, I can freely utter though differing with the "Irish World" to the last degree on at least one leading topic of economic enquiry, the Currency. And I am sure I can say it all whilst sincerely wishing to other Journals devoted to the interests of labor every success in their good and honorable work.

I take the present opportunity of acknowledging the generosity with which the columns of the Journal referred to have been placed at my disposal. I have preserved the headings to the different papers from the pen of the Editor himself. These headings reveal, with much force and precision, the contents of each, serving in this respect as a sort of illuminated index to the text. Some little addition has here and there been made to the original papers.

About twenty years since I threw out some observations on this Land Question in the course of a series of articles on the effects of usury on prices and wages, contributed to "Hunt's Merchant's Magazine," a New York Journal of well known and established reputation, and an extract from which will be found in the present volume. The views then advanced were substantially the same as are here advocated, though of course not with anything like the present fullness. I then pointed out a great economic truth, that the renting of land is the usury of land, just as the renting of money is the usury of money, and to be judged mainly by the same conditions. Then there were but few indeed to listen to anything regarding economic topics which ran counter to the popular and established notions of the day. What my political economy taught me then when the land question was nobody's cause, my political economy teaches me still when the land question has become a popular cause. The lapse of a quarter of a century has witnessed a wonderful change. We have not now a movement confined to a few muttered words from a solitary thinker here and there. We now witness an upheaving almost as wide as humanity itself, and which is destined to sweep everything before it, even though dungeons should groan with imprisoned patriots and the most powerful thrones be shaken to their fall. A new economy is dawning over all the world; thought, long asleep, is now thoroughly aroused; everything points to the coming of that tremendous revolution which will not only settle for ever the long contest whether the heavens do rule, but restore to the industrial world its long lost patrimony; the minds of working men are everywhere astir about these great labor problems, and they are now, like wearied and long-tossed mariners, intently "looking out for the land"; the light is spreading with marvelous rapidity; and we have millions bent on knowing not only the truths of the new but the errors of the old economy. Evidence accumulates in my hands, and I suppose in the hands of others, that many men of the highest education, and holding positions of trust and influence, are quietly but earnestly thinking out these questions for themselves. Let us trust in that growing spirit of human brotherhood which longs for some better evidence of its existence than the advent of the tax collector's bill, the

\* A hand now cold in death wrote regarding this Journal: "The enterprise and patriotism exhibited in the IRISH WORLD are worthy of the highest commendation." — J. A. GARFIELD.

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evictor's process, or the despotism of that industrial competition which mocks all the teachings of Christianity and is grinding up society piecemeal.

Of this we may be certain, that the political economy of the colleges and schools will either have to take itself off to parts unknown, or submit to such a redressing that its own friends will hardly know it. The cloistered philosophy of the schools, though it would at present as soon be called upon to lift hot iron, need not hope to escape meeting this new economy face to face.

And here let me pause, just for a moment, to point out to my readers, and especially to the more youthful of them, how truly noble are the investigations towards which this volume is an attempt to point the way. What a discipline for mental effort; what a broadening of all human sympathies; what a formative and commanding power towards integrity of character, rectitude of morals, and righteousness of life; how august the themes themselves, those are sure to know who approach them with a whole-hearted purpose and an earnest desire to seek for nothing but truth. Nothing rejoices me more than to hear of young men making these problems their study. One word of warning. The man who hopes to drink from these new fountains of truth must rid himself of a world of prejudice, and approach them with the spirit of a little child. The education of "the street" must be all cast aside when he begins the study of the great laws of this new political economy.

I have discussed the land and rent questions almost exclusively from the economic side. Volumes innumerable have been written as to the political and historical aspects of the case, many of them treating the subject of land tenure with great ability, and evincing unwearyed research. But it seemed to me that very much remained to be said on the *economies* of the questions. Hence these papers.

In addition to those bearing immediately on the land question, I have selected from my contributions to the Journal previously referred to, and have incorporated with the present volume, sundry other papers having so close a relation to the great subjects discussed that they could not well be dispensed with on this occasion. Each of these papers will be found supplementary to the line of argument followed in the Catechism itself.

Everybody is interested in the subject of property, the rich because they have it, and the toilers because they have it not and ought as producers to have it. The *rights of property* I can never, as an economist, regard otherwise than as a misleading and meaningless phrase. The *rights to property* is a term which all can understand, and in which every one, from the very rich to the very poor, has a personal and lasting interest. It carries the mind in a moment from the dead inert matter to the active and living being who produces all. The *rights of human beings* are anterior to, and infinitely superior to, all those loose ideas which spring from that very loose phrase, the *rights of property*. We will look upon the subject, therefore, principally from this and associated points of view. It is a self-evident truth that if the working population constantly surrender the fruits of their toil without full equivalent being given—that is, an equivalent in value to that of the products surrendered—then the *rights to property*, contract notwithstanding, are persistently violated, and it is held by hands which ought not to hold it. For it is not so much a contract, as the industrial righteousness of a contract.

which fortifies true ownership. In fact, contracts which constantly ignore or violate the rights of labor can never give birth to true ownership; for ownership can only spring from a contract which is economically equitable and just, and which truly transfers value for value. The very *idea* of an industrial contract implies value for value. And our discussion will naturally lead us to the consideration, not of the property itself, but rather of the economic laws and conditions bearing upon the labor out of which that property springs. For is it not true that the only way to understand the rights *to* property, is to understand what defines, regulates and sustains the rights of labor, in so far as that labor gives birth to the property or lays upon it its moulding and forming hand? What relation does the producer bear to the product, is therefore the first and serious question to be settled. Can he surrender *all*, or can he surrender *any*, portion of it without a full equivalent being made? If he cannot, how comes it that producers are all poor, non-producers all rich? These are the questions now pressing for an answer as questions never pressed before. It is wisdom to meet them, for it is vain to think that they can be longer hid.

If it be true that the industrial world is surrendering its fruits without an economic equivalent being made, then I appeal to the common sense of every reader if an industrial crime is not being committed which has no parallel in the history of our race. For all other crime is naturally intermittent; but this never pauses night or day, and in its wide devastation throws all other crime into the shade. If this be the state of the industrial problem, then strikes, lock-outs, turmoil and disorder, are the *natural* fruits of such a condition of things; just as natural as that the wire, stretched beyond its power of tension, must eventually break; or that the lava, long restrained, must some day or other break forth in a wide and desolating stream.

Perhaps the fact most prominently brought forward by the present land agitation is the extent to which society is festering with the pernicious doctrine that law creates right. I am sure this is too obvious to be disputed. Not only is no concealment made, but the utmost pains are taken to proclaim the extent to which a doctrine involving such utter depravity is corrupting the national life. It pours from the press like a putrid stream. It seems as if there were a foregone conclusion that inalienable human rights must all be borne down before whatever is embodied in a modern statute-book, or voted upon by a clamorous and excited crowd met together within the four walls of a building. Men are but too prone to forget that truth is truth in spite of all the resolutions and votes ever carried or cast. This intensely unchristian and perilous doctrine honeycombs our so-called christian society through and through. This land movement has compelled it to reveal itself in its true colors. It has nowhere to hide itself in presence of the burning light which is being thrown around these economic problems. What wonder if it attempt once more—and let us hope but once more—to play the tyrant with the people and stretch forth its hands in deeds of violence in default of ability to lift its voice in argument, apparently oblivious of the fact that a traitor to truth is the man guilty of high treason against God and man. If a man who breaks a human statute, abominable in its inception and cruel and devastating in all its issues, is a small traitor, what sort of traitor is the man who tramples under foot the law of that dread Being before whom he must shortly stand, and who by his wild and

ignore or ownership. just, and act implies sideration, ns bearing e that the at defines, birth to the ation does ation to be without a rs are all ng for an or it is vain without an very reader the history ever pauses shade. If urmoil and natural as break; or a wide and land agita- trine that only is no nt to which It pours conclusion s embodied bwd met to- et that truth is intensely cian society itself in its light which if it attempt people and its voice in man guilty an statute, issues, is a the law of is wild and

reckless acts brings misery and sorrow to countless hearths and homes? And the doctrine is all the more perilous inasmuch as it is held by those who flatter themselves with the belief that what they call law and order is necessarily opposed to anarchy and turmoil; losing sight of the fact that bad laws and bad systems are the fruitful sources of crime, and must ever instigate to those public disorders which are the natural protests against such laws and part of the disciplinary process of cure. To impose bad laws can never be less than a crime—to discuss bad laws can never be criminal. I have often questioned in my own mind to what extent human laws and parliaments have been the parents of violence and crime. And the more I think over it, the more am I driven to repose faith in the one great statute book given by God for the regulation of human affairs and the security of all industry, which embraces every vital interest and protects every human right. Between the purity of God's law on the one hand, and what we are accustomed to regard simply as human depravity on the other, may it not be a most momentous question, whether there lies in that middle ground a vast embodiment of so-called human law which has really opened floodgates of iniquity which all this simple human depravity would of itself have been powerless to move one inch? Does not our peril lie, as expressed in the Word of God, in "framing mischief by a law"? Framing mischief—how expressive! We have got accustomed to hear the poor and oppressed multitudes branded as the dangerous classes. Many wise and thoughtful men are crying halt to such an opinion. For the most dangerous man is not the one who runs a-muck amongst his fellows. His race is soon over and his evil deeds confined to narrowest bounds. Men are becoming everywhere painfully sensible of the fact that it is not in such quarters that the real sources of danger are to be found. And let us not forget that it is an instinct of humanity to save itself from destruction, even when that destruction is sought to be accomplished "by process of law." If destruction of the tillers is the inevitable issue and the thing on which men are bent, then a leap from the precipice into the sea is more quickly accomplished, has less of evil about it, and costs a great deal less—that is to say, the nation will not have to foot so heavy a bill. And over and above all, it is well if our indignation be occasionally tempered with the reflection that it is infallible wisdom which declares that oppression will at last drive even wise men mad.

I repeat in the Introduction what I have insisted on in the body of the work, that it is sinful and discreditable to compel obedience to bad laws on the ground that efforts will be made to patch and tinker these laws for the public good. To compel humanity to submit to a process of cruel and arbitrary destruction in the expectation that something may eventually be done in the way of amelioration, may call itself what it likes, but it is not Christianity. The spirit which would prompt such a line of argument, especially where precedents have been all unfavorable, is as despicable as it is wicked. Such a one must cry halt to his folly else he will have his house in flames. Either that or humanity is not humanity. Now, I am willing to accept the arguments of those who advocate such a doubtful process of reformation. For if it be good to submit to the powers that be in the hope of bills of "amendments" to the bills being passed, it must be far better, in cases where human and divine laws are in conflict (and that there is a mighty conflict is now evident to all), it is better, I say, in such circumstances, to submit to the source of all power and to obey the

divine rather than the human, and this on the ground of conscientious conviction as well as of age, authority and precedence. And surely no Christian will hesitate as to his course of conduct when divine law and authority are on one side and Acts of Parliament on the other. It is certain that the divine law was first on the statute book, and it is certain that it is there still. Let every man at his peril obey the good law which needs no amendment, not the bad law which stands in need of daily tinkering, which can give no reasonable account of itself, and which we may be sure has crawled upon the stage with no good end in view. If we deliberately violate natural and divine law, the only truly "constituted authority," and teach simple souls to do the same, what shield will our devotion to human governments prove to us in the great day? It is to God, not to man, that we must all give account at last; it is to his law, not to man's, that humanity must yield obedience.

And what a contrast there is between human and divine law—the one a cruel, unbending, and cast-iron yoke; in the main a manufacturer of crime and of criminals; whose endless and hap-hazard complications nobody can understand, and which are often a puzzle and entanglement to the lawyers themselves; whose final and malignant issues are seen in thousands of industrious and toiling people cast out on the road side to perish, an issue whose grim satire certainly loses nothing in dramatic effect in so far as it is all done by "due process of law"—the other the safeguard of labor, of property, of house and home, preservative of every human right, and throwing its wide and beneficent arms around every human being from the cradle to the grave. The marvel is that men can be found bowing themselves in the house of this great Lawgiver on the Sabbath day, and spending the week in manufacturing pains and penalties for their fellow men, and in endeavoring to cast aside all the restraints of that divine law which once a week they profess to admire and obey. If there is any warning more than another needed by men at the present day, it is with regard to the encroachment of this seductive and dangerous spirit. Those who permit it to overrun their minds will come to think they do God service in the attempt to legislate nations from off the face of the earth. A more terrible scourge to humanity can hardly be conceived. And it festers in our Christian society. Men come to approve by their silence, if not to provoke by their open sympathy, the most terrible deeds if only done under the covert of this fetish they call law. If ever the "abomination that maketh desolate" stands where it ought not, it is when it has entered the dwellings of the poor—dwellings reared or paid for entirely by the labor of their own hands—and with a remorseless barbarity on which the naked savage of New Guinea would turn his back ashamed, proceeds to cast out helpless infancy and age to perish by the road side or in the ditch, and to tear in pieces the roof-tree which has been a shelter to the venerable frame now bending with infirmity and years, and to the bonny bairns whose heart-breaking sobs mingle with the patter of heaven's cold rain on the bleak hill side. On an average, for the last forty years, thirty humble dwellings in Ireland have been thus ruthlessly destroyed every day, year in and year out, and one hundred and fifty human beings daily cast out of their homes! The appalling record has found a place in the recent Census, and its truth cannot be disputed, a Census which may well cause the blush of shame to mount to every

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check.\* When the nation's *hearth* is thus violated and *the family* destroyed by process of law, then look out for judgment. The deed is beyond discussion. A nation may well tremble when it has reached to such a stage. O my brother, my brother, as you hope for heaven's smile on your own dying bed, let me entreat you never to be identified in thought or word or act with such deeds as these. On the contrary, let the knowledge that such things are done in our day determine you at once to take the side of the stricken and the oppressed.

Humanity cannot do the impossible. Its powers, its knowledge, its resources, are limited. In these thousands of years it has been trying to do what never can be done, rule itself. This is absolutely beyond its power. It is just as impossible for humanity of itself, or apart from revelation, to form a code of laws suitable for humanity, as for a senseless bit of machinery to begin a process of reasoning as to its parts, its powers, or its movements. That the first attempt to do this of which we have the record was a deliberate effort to dethrone God, we have the testimony of the Deity himself: "They have not rejected thee; but they have rejected me that I should not reign over them.".... "Perceive and see that your wickedness is great in asking you a king.".... "Ye have this day rejected your God." It was an insult to the Almighty, as well as to the good, ample, and sufficient laws with which he had launched humanity on the race of life. This was the spirit and the act which have made of this fair earth a hell, and filled it with the deeds of hell. *Then was born to man an enemy which has never since ceased to scourge him and to strip him bare*; a thought which I want to plant deep, as a seed of truth, in the heart of every man who reads this page. Human liberty then dug its own grave. God knew what was in man, and he knew exactly and to an absolute certainty what statutes, judgments, and commandments it was necessary to give to him in beginning his long and eventful journey on the earth, a knowledge to which man could not, of himself, ever attain. The words of the venerable Seer who told to the people the manner of the king who should reign over them, have been verified to the letter in every subsequent period of history; and I know of no more interesting study than to trace, sentence by sentence, that wonderful prophecy (1st Samuel viii. 10-18) as it stands side by side related to all that nations have attempted and suffered, and to the most prominent and painful features of modern society and life. The fulfilment of that prophecy is before our eyes clear as the noonday sun—the world scourged to dearth under the iron reign of taxes and

\* Here are the figures :

1841 : Houses in Ireland 1,328,839 ; 1881, ditto 912,761 ; decrease in 40 years, 416,078. In the last 10 years 49,000 dwellings disappeared. And as if this were not just sufficient, the House of Commons is busy passing laws to cast out more tillers to make room for more beasts. I say, with such a spirit as this at work, that were there no America to open its sheltering arms to these poor exiles, a Siberia would soon be found for them. One of the Royal Irish Constabulary has recently given a description in the pages of the *Irish World* of an eviction in which he was compelled to bear a part. He tells us of the terror which filled the cabin when it was taken possession of by armed men—of the running home of the poor children (poor but clean) from school when they heard of their parents being in the hands of the sheriff—of the few traps cast out on the road—of the wife of the tenant, an invalid on crutches, being helped out of doors by the afflicted husband—of an invalid sister—of the wailing of the children, the eldest only 13—of the little plot of 8 acres, with its rent of £8 as 6d—of the subscription taken up by members of the force for the helpless family, but which was suppressed by those in command—and of two of the little boys carrying out a sleeping babe in its little cradle into the drenching rain.

tribute. "The manner of the king." How suggestive, how comprehensive the sentence! Man has set aside the laws of God. He has assumed the place of the law-giver, and has been permitted to take the reins in his own hand. And with what results, let the confusion, the bloodshed, the discord, the anarchy, the hostile forces of society in constant array, testify. To rule humanity is not the prerogative of humanity but of God. The talk about the sovereign people may be very loud talk, but when you have said that you have said all. Man comes forth a puling infant, and is little better than a puling infant to the end of the chapter. To imagine that this poor little creature, groping along step by step, can regulate and set bounds to destiny itself by wretched little acts of parliament, is arrogance and impudence combined. To unfold some deep-laid scheme as to the best way of taxing the sugar and the tea, the pepper and the tobacco of the toiling millions—what a theme to engage the attention of assembled lords and benches of bishops and patriotic commoners the livelong night! The wonder is that man has tolerated the hideous incubus so long.

Now, is the narrative of Saul the king applicable only to the days of Saul, or to the men of the time of Saul? Or does it speak in warning tones to those who shout their throats hoarse over every subsequent coronation? Is poor sad Saul the only king whom God has given in his anger and taken away in his wrath? What do a thousand bloody Gilboas testify? Can peace and this system reign in harmony together? Is Saul the only great one who has fallen upon his own sword? Is there no lesson to be learned from that kingly corpse and that blood-stained sword on Mount Gilboa, *the instrument of his own death in his own hand?* What is the stupendous secret that history here wraps up in its hand? Is there an inevitable conflict which must ever be fought out to the bitter end? Is not man always worsted in the fight? Is it not man setting himself down in God's seat? Can you conceive of deeper impiety than the poor short-sighted creatures for whom God has framed and set forth his laws arrogating to themselves the seat of the divine Lawgiver? Is not God forcing home the conviction of its awful perils before the face of all men at the present day? Can you shew me the throne, it matters not under what political name it is known, which has not been over and over again drenched in blood? Is not the wildness of modern commerce and of modern politics threatening to make of us a race of lunatics? Did it ever cross your brain that the great words of the great Son of man, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," really rule Cæsar and all his claims out of existence? Have you ever thought of the utter destruction wrapped up in this lofty sentence? Or have you ever thought, on the other hand, of the tremendous peril and utter depravity of the cry from the lips of the chief priests and rulers in presence of the King of kings, "We have no king but Cæsar"? Was not this cry the very consummation of human wickedness? Is it not uttered as boldly and defiantly at the present day as it was in the presence of Pilate? Is there not the most urgent need of lifting up a warning about it? Is it not, in spite of all our religious form and show, as rampant a spirit now as when it crucified the Lord of glory? And what will it not lead men to do in their attempts at coercion once the mind becomes thoroughly enslaved by this spirit? Those who were so loud as to their allegiance in presence of Pilate are long since in their graves, but no small multitude still wears their shoes. Let us read.

with devout fear the second Psalm. Depend upon it, the word of God will either break us or rule us. No man can escape from it. Let us think, let us think.

The casting down of the thrones witnessed by the prophet Daniel points to the destruction of all this earthly usurpation as preparatory to the universal and righteous reign of one "like the Son of man," whose dominion is everlasting, not to pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Every reader of scripture is familiar with the august scene which passed before the prophet's eye, and set forth in language worthy of so great a vision. What is all this mighty unrest of labor, but the world's great heart throbbing as it never throbbed before for the advent of that day? And so the labor question, in so far as it comprehends that great system of industrial oppression which has overspread the civilized world, is identified with the most stupendous and eventful scenes which the pen of the historian will ever have to chronicle. What is there at the present day comparable to this great theme of human labor? Take this labor question out of the prophetic scriptures, and you reduce a large portion of these scriptures to little better than a meaningless tale. The oppression of labor and the judgments on the oppressors of labor teem in almost every page. It is the burning question of Exodus as it is the burning question of Revelation. If you want to understand the Revelation of Saint John, interpret it with the book of Exodus in your hand and with the ruin of industry in the person of the toilers before your eyes. The wail of Egyptian bondage, the cry of oppressed and unrequited labor, comes down to us through the long centuries. Had Egypt done justly by her laborers she would have remained to this day. As Pharoah, an oppressor of labor, perished in his sin, so will Babylon, compared with whose oppression that of Pharoah was but a bagatelle, perish in her sin. Who can doubt that a second exodus is at hand compared with which that from Egypt was but a type and shadow?

Christ's treatment of the subject of Tribute is a study of itself. Read and ponder the passages: Mat. xvii, 24-27; xxii, 15-22; Mark xii, 13-17; Luke xx, 19-26; xxiii, 2. Does he stand forth as its friend or as its enemy? How do you interpret his conduct in paying taxes simply that he might give no occasion of offence? What meaning for the sons of men has this deep protest from the Son of God?

Thus man will not let well alone. In the undoing of these divine laws he has lost the favor of his Creator as well as the purest sources of contemplation and delight. And if we would learn how great a source of pleasure God's statutes may become to the devout mind, let us read the cxix Psalm, where the echo of every sentence is a testimony to the glory and majesty of the righteous judgments and commandments of the Most High. Has not this pure source of delight been long all but lost to the Christian church? And what had David to ponder over, what the source of his supreme joy, but a few pages of what we in our ignorance would call a fragmentary record, but which he recognised as all in all? There is nothing for us but to come back to these statutes. Depths may be found there that the most philosophic mind will fail to fathom, and material for thought that the most reflective will fail to exhaust. His commandment is "exceeding broad." Not seldom have I listened, with equal pain and sadness, to the empty religionist, carried away with "the progress of the age," lisping forth his shallow sneer at laws before whose stupendous majesty I stand as on holy ground. To submit to these laws is the true and only cure for that terrible condition of society

which is filling us all with such anxious alarm. As was done by the people of Ephesus, nations will have to come together and burn their books of curious arts, though the price thereof should be found to be uncounted millions of pieces of silver. Men never made a greater mistake than to suppose that the law from Sinai's rugged peaks was something destined to perish in the infancy of the race. Lost! It has reigned through all the ages, sweeping the disobedient from its path, burying mighty nations in all but forgotten tombs, and breaking in pieces the haughty and disobedient like a potter's vessel. God must reign, and man must know where his place is and how to keep that place. The book of God can submit to no divided authority. All human legislation must go and that book reign supreme. It is God who is the Lawgiver, not man. God is the author—man the subject. As complications sometimes become too serious ever to be unraveled, and leave no alternative but to destroy and begin anew, so the complications and disorders of society cannot be patched by tinkering with such things as Acts of Parliaments or of Congress, or with feeble "bills" of human legislation, though you number their "clauses" by the thousand and protract your vigils over them from year's end to year's end. When the lightning condescends to listen to your fair speeches, then you may venture in with your little bills and ballot boxes and well-trimmed schemes. The broken locomotive whose wheels and movements are all out of gear must not be permitted to encumber the track, for there are other trains upon the road entitled to the right of way. The peril is that these foolish tinkerers may be found still busy with their trifling and their patching when the collision comes. That God reigns, that man has undone himself in attempting the impossible, and that pride must be abased, are the lessons we have to learn, though, like one of old, we should have to go down on all fours and herd with the beasts of the field ere the obedient spirit comes. The whole art of government is to obey God's commandments. There is no problem in the matter at all. It is not, How will we do it? but, Will we do it? We would inhabit a new world if men would but cease their search after that which is not and turn their attention toward that which is. Trouble not your head, reader, *how* this new economy is to overspread the world—that is known to God alone. Be it yours to know, for yourself, the true economy under which you have been placed upon the earth. To imagine that the stupendous wrongs of countless generations, with every form of evil formulated into a vast and compact system, and all organised with skill more than human, can be righted by such things as our modern acts of parliament or a few votes cast in a ballot box, or this or that bran new politician installed in office, is silliness run mad. You might just as well relegate the interests of humanity to a congress of owls. There is a cure upon the way and posting ominously near, before which parliaments and constitutions shall shrivel as the stubble before the flame, and his is a dull ear indeed that does not catch the mutterings of that gathering storm.

"The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Yes, that is it. In these pages I make no new and perilous adventure with human interests. It is simply old truths retold. Here is our safety and nowhere else. The world of human beings must deal *righteously* with each other else there is no hope for us. The toiler must get the entire fruits of his toil—we must not give shelter to a lie and throw wide the door to industrial ruin under the garb of a contract—there must be value given for value—

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exchange must be sanctified and upheld by the living principle of inexorable justice—there must be an absolute transfer of toil for toil, value for value, labor for labor—the money of the world must be labor's product, money in fact, and not a fraud and delusion—the usurious spirit must be destroyed—we must fling these tattered human statutes to the winds, and search up the imperishable foundations of economic truth—this terrible commercial system amidst which we live, and which so blinds the minds of men, must be thoroughly exposed—then shall the world enjoy the quietness and the assurance which the prophet proclaims, and the chains be broken for ever from the limbs of toil. Brethren beloved, be it ours to help in laying the true foundations of this grand temple of industry and peace. To a nobler work you could not apply your hands. It is a heroic and immortal work whose broad opportunities and lofty promises have never been matched in the history of our race.

The present great land movement has fully demonstrated that its progress has not in the least degree been arrested by the opposition of a hostile press; and how bitterly hostile a large portion of the newspaper press has been is obvious to all. One thing, at any rate, it has not failed to let us know—how dearly it loves a landlord, and that his very shadow is enough to command its profound respect. It is well that we have learned that a great cause which concerns the life and well-being of the nations does not hang its existence on the favor of the newspaper press of the day. A sorry reformation we would make of it if such were the case. A People's Movement such as this, one which has hardly had a parallel in history, has no occasion either to fear it or court it. It has grown in spite of it. Press virulence can neither scorch it nor kill it. The poor and feeble artillery of a landlord press may make plenty clatter, but that is about all. Its most painful mental exercise is to undo to-day the lies of yesterday. It is a marvel indeed that the submarine cables have not broken down under the weight of fabrication imposed upon them. It is certain that the industrial world has now learned to distinguish friend from foe. Its perceptive faculties have of late been so greatly quickened that one hardly dips his pen in ink ere it is known on which side his sympathy leans. In this contest which is now shaking the world, and which is destined yet to shake it with a far ruder hand, there can be no middle course, for the good reason that there is no middle ground on which to stand. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth," is a decisive sentence which cuts short all pleadings and stops every mouth, a sentence startling and terrible indeed to every responsible being. O that we could all listen to it and lay it to heart.

A single economic truth once fairly grasped is worth all your ballot votes ever cast, or all the political schemes which have ever distracted the human mind. Let it be once thoroughly demonstrated to the people that rent is an economic injustice and the doom of rent is sealed. An economic truth which you may write out on a slip of paper and hide in a nutshell is better than all the folios which have ever sprung from wig-encumbered heads.

"All the weights of the bag are his work," is a sentence which embraces more than appears on the surface. It proclaims to us that the entire products of industry are consecrated by the hand of toil, and are to be devoted to the purpose of sustaining and strengthening the lives and hopes of the producers. I have often regarded it as one of the marvels of the science known as Political Economy that

amidst all the diversities of human life, and amidst all the complications and endless bargainings of human society, every toiler should still be able to lay his hand on certain commodities and say without a moment's hesitation, "these are mine." In a natural economic condition of things, the boundaries of labor, or rather the results of labor, would be defined with an accuracy and precision which would never leave room for doubt. Does not this far-reaching spirit of equity which sets every wheel in motion, and sustains all in perfect order from beginning to end, verify the words quoted, that all the "weights" introduced into this apparently most complicated hive of human industry are arranged by an infinite and unerring hand, and that there are principles of equity everywhere at work which nations can only violate at their peril? And seeing this is the case, who can contemplate, without feelings of the deepest compassion, the entire toiling world divorced from the ownership and enjoyment of all these magnificent products of its own handiwork and left to struggle as best it may between life and death?

I have no faith in any effort at labor reform which is not based from beginning to end upon the broad word of God. To the law and to the testimony we must turn. Let us give our attention to the bible. It is the only faithful charter of our liberties and hopes. I appeal to every labor reformer to take that book more and more in hand. The man who thinks there is no political economy in the bible, has studied his bible to little purpose. It embraces all the great elements of economic truth. Its last stupendous scenes are a record of the final destruction of the vast system of labor oppression which has so long cursed the race. To the working world, and especially to such a working world as we see before us at the present day, the bible stands revealed as the messenger of him who is sure to visit a righteous retribution on the heads of all who contribute to the destruction of the poor and the oppressed. And the labor movement will only prove true and worthy of success in so far as every claim it makes is supported and sanctioned by the word of God. Weary and worn and disappointed to the last degree with human law, let us now turn to that which is divine.

*Latifundia perdidere Italiam\** is a proverb which has come down to us through many a past age. Its solemn warnings fall with redoubled significance on the ears of the present generation. If national purity and life are to be restored and preserved, the salutary laws of the divine order must reign. At every hazard the property produced by working men, and the broad and fertile lands given by God for the sustenance of the race, must be protected and preserved for the producers and tillers. The people must be aroused to the enormity of the public crime of compelling dispossessed millions to pay for wild lands unpierced by spade or plough. We want the divine law promulgated in all its sweeping majesty and breadth—we want the pulpit to find a voice—we want a press characterized by a new spirit and a new life—we want man to live everywhere in the fraternity of a common brotherhood—we want this terrible system of commercial communism destroyed, a system which constantly sweeps away the rewards of toil, and whose communistic spirit is so thoroughly organized that the fault or misfortune of one man may paralyze or bring to ruin an entire community. For I want the reader to point out to me if he can a worse practical illustration of communism than that which, unhappily, we

\* Freely translated it may read, "Landlordism ruined Rome."

see before us every day—merchants met to put an unfortunate debtor through his facings, each of them in search of a lost quantity, and all of them with faces as long as your arm. To cry “communist” to labor reformers, you know, in the midst of such surroundings, would remind us of a homely but forcible proverb about the pot calling the kettle black.

However desirous that these papers should be read in quarters which in their original form they might fail to reach, it would have been impossible for me, without aid from other sources, to have had them reprinted. On making my wishes known among a few friends, aid was promptly and generously given. To those who have assisted in procuring a substantial subscription list for two thousand copies (the first edition), as well as to all who have so kindly responded with their subscriptions, my best thanks are due. It will shew the interest taken in this land question when I state that many subscribed for four, ten, and twenty copies each, with the view of sending them to their friends in the old land. I earnestly solicit friends of the cause to help in making a liberal distribution of the volume not only in Ireland, but also in England and Scotland. It is hoped that more editions will be called for through the organized efforts of industrial organizations as well as through the generous help of individual readers. The ordinary channels of literary circulation will probably be closed against this volume. The more need that every true friend of labor and of free discussion should aid in its circulation. The papers have already been read or heard read by hundreds of thousands—I want them read by hundreds of thousands more. I want the noble and generous minded among the rich and well-to-do as well as the lowly toiler, to read and ponder them. When you have read the book, lend it to your neighbor or send it to your friend. Do not place it upon your shelf, but keep it moving from hand to hand. Gather in your neighbors to your fireside after the labors of the day, and there let it be read aloud and its contents discussed. I am glad to know that this has been done with these papers to a large extent already. Toiling men, let me say to you that your own humble contributions will not be lost or lightly valued. It is your own work, and from you its true support must come. Not seldom have I spoken to you through the press, and words of cheer from you have been my best reward. This great work of industrial regeneration may have to grow slowly, but it will grow surely. Thought, if there be life in it, must submit, like the natural seed, to the ordinary process of germination and growth. This book takes, I am aware, advanced ground, but ground from which there is no retreat, and which, once proclaimed, can never be lost. It heralds the day when the world's toilers shall not as now in their dying moments have added to the anguish of departing life the bitter reflection that they leave their helpless ones to face a condition where want dogs every step, and famine is ever threatening at the door. It foreshadows the coming day when that triumvirate of curses, Rent, Taxation, and Usury, shall no longer blight the world and scourge our race—when men shall understand the full import of their daily prayer, “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

My working readers need not be deterred from the investigation of these industrial problems under the apprehension that they are so subtle and abstruse as to be beyond their reach. I am quite sure that this is a false impression. These problems, when placed before the mind in their true simplicity, are especially within the compass of the working population. That daily education of

a working man which familiarizes him with toil and the fruits of toil, specially fits him to grasp the situation when once his attention is aroused. In proof, I point to the extraordinary progress being made by thousands of working men in their knowledge of the labor question, a progress which, it seems to me, is leaving many of our highly educated classes quite behind. The false interpretations of a spurious economy float like an impenetrable mist over the seething caldron of English Political Economy, and no wonder if those who create that mist get constantly confused with their own reckonings, and bring upon their science a name associated with all that is dismal and repellent. But there is no need that working men should enter that mist at all. If the learned professors can afford to do so, I am positive that the working men cannot afford to do so. Let the toiler turn his attention to the simple but truthful definitions which the new economy presents before him, and success is at his hand. There is not a working man who takes up this little volume but may rest assured that with ordinary patience and perseverance, joined to a reasonable measure of determination, he will not be long in mastering all that is needful for him to know. Then, with every step in knowledge will come a step in freedom. One great aim in the preparation of this book, is to get working men *interested* in vital questions which so closely concern them. I entreat my working friends to beware of ignorance and indifference. If they remain wilfully in chains, chains will be their portion. Scripture declares to us that wisdom and knowledge are to be the stability of the approaching times. Think of it. *Stability of the times.* What a contrast to these "times"—nothing settled, all unrest, elements all at war, labor an iron furnace, panics and tumult in constant and rapid succession, ignorance and folly the source of that troubled "sea" from whose unclean and restless surface humanity constantly fails to gather either flower or fruit.

If there is anything more than another which this book repudiates and condemns, it is that spirit of communism which enters upon the possession of property without full equivalent and compensation, or which would hand over all the proceeds of labor to the management of a gigantic corporation called the State. No such spirit will be found in a single line of these pages. On the contrary, it claims that men shall stand on their own feet—that they shall everywhere enjoy the fruits of their own toil and not an atom more; and that their property shall be kept in hand for themselves and families, and not thrown to the winds on that wild sea of commercial gambling where it becomes the sport of speculators who live by their wits, and who flourish or fall as rumor comes and goes or as this or that lie takes the market.

As reasonable and responsible beings, then, we are bound to know the truth about the mighty problems here discussed. To *know* is a great step towards safety—to be wilfully ignorant will be our ruin. A nation which does not understand the true principles of political economy, or which believes in the spurious economy under which we have been so long tutored, will be an enslaved nation, for it will know little or nothing of its rights. Under an outward show of liberty, oppression the deepest and the darkest will reign in all its force. A nation led astray by a spurious economy takes the downward path to ruin—a nation which understands a true economy will never be a nation of toiling serfs. Would England, for example, have to contend as she has to do to-day with the ceaseless and ever-growing burdens of pauperism, did the toiling millions of England but

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thoroughly understand their economic rights? A nation which begins to open its long-closed eyes to the rays of truth, takes the first step on the march to freedom. You may drum up subscriptions for the national cause by the million—you will never remove one shackle from the nation's limbs till you have spread the light of Intelligence throughout its dwellings. It remains with ourselves whether we shall be found in the day of trial among the enemies of industry, or among its friends. To our own master we stand or fall. Let a broken-hearted world command our sympathy and invoke our aid. Let us never forget that we are all hastening to that judgment seat from whose solemn sentence there will be no appeal. Let us fear God with a reverence so deep and devout that we shall not rest till we have settled in our own minds what is his will with regard to Human Labor, its rights and its rewards. To this, and nothing less than this, every reasonable man is called.

W. B.

MONTREAL, June, 1881.

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## No. I.

## FOR THE STUDY OF ALL WHO SEEK THE TRUTH—NEITHER LANDLORDS NOR TENANTS IN THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE CREATOR.

[NOTE.—I dedicate these papers to honest tillers of the soil of every nationality and name. I have written them under the conviction that it is the duty of every cultivator to understand the economic laws under which he toils from day to day, and that is also our duty to understand what is the mind of the Creator himself with regard to His own land laws. I ask from my readers in return, that they strive to give these papers the widest circulation possible.]

QUESTION. Who made the land?

ANSWER. God.

Q. For what purpose did he make it?

A. As a home for the human family and to yield sustenance to the race.

Q. For whom did he create it?

A. For each individual born into the world.

Q. Has each child born a claim to a share of the land so as to yield him where-with to sustain life?

A. He has—it is his birthright. It of course ceases with death.

Q. Has any child a preferential claim over another child?

A. No—all have equal claims, because it is the duty of each to sustain the life God has given.

Q. Is it the duty of the child, when arrived at maturity, to appropriate his portion or share of the land?

A. It is his privilege, and, as far as may be, his duty, in order to fulfil the purposes of his creation (that is to multiply and replenish the earth), to appropriate an unappropriated portion of God's earth.

Q. Is the land, then, a gift from God to the children of men?

A. It is—to all men equally, not unequally.

Q. If it be a gift from God, can men sell to each other portions of the earth, God's gift?

A. They cannot. They can only sell the labor spent upon the ground, the improvements—the ground as such cannot be sold.

Q. Should every parent teach this truth to his child?

A. He should. It is his duty to do so.

Q. Why should he do so?

A. To prevent troubles and quarreling about land; to tell his children what are God's designs as to the land; to prevent its monopoly; and to secure peace and happiness for his posterity.

Q. Does God anywhere enforce this view, as to the soil being in a manner his special property?

A. He does. He challenges us in Scripture to note that the land is his—that he reserves in it, as it were, a special proprietary right.

Q. Do you think that the command that the land shall not be sold forever has reference to that point?

A. It may have, remotely. But that command, I rather think, had reference to the solidity and perpetuity of the nation; and, it may be, also to domestic privileges and rights. Evidently it had reference to the homestead, to the improvements of the land or farm which might be sold, not to the land itself as land which cannot be sold.

Q. Does the improved land go with the improvements on the occasion of a sale?

A. Certainly—you cannot separate them—but it is only the improvements which can be sold, or for which you can demand pay.

Q. Is it the same economic law in operation as regulates the sale of every commodity man can handle, and on which he has bestowed his labor?

A. Just the same. It is only human labor which can be sold. The *material* itself is the free gift of God. This truth ~~is~~ to what it is that men really sell, namely, human labor and nothing else, is an unfailing economic law; and to this I refer when I say the land itself, as land, cannot be priced and sold.

Q. Should there be a limit to the holding of each man or family?

A. Certainly.

Q. Why should there be so?

A. Because a man or family can have no use for more than that family can cultivate, and to take more would be an encroachment on public rights, or the rights of others—it would be taking what is not yours, and to which you have neither title nor claim. You can only claim *your own*—the portion designed to you by God—the limits you and your family can cultivate, and as fixed and arranged by a national decree. For the land is God's, not yours. And if you defeat God's design and plan made evident to us all, then you rob both God and man.

Q. What is the necessary or essential limit as to quantity?

A. In general terms, the ability to cultivate and care for is the necessary limit. *The ability to cultivate is your limit—having cultivated is your title, evidenced to all or made good.*

Q. In a country of much less fertility than others should the limits be enlarged?

A. Surely.

Q. I notice that the Economists, in their writings, make a great deal out of what they call the land being limited—much that I do not subscribe to—is it true that, as to supply, it is limited?

A. Of course this globe has its fixed dimensions, but practically, land is, and always will be, unlimited. There will be, to the end of time, ample land for every human being. To think otherwise would be a serious reproach on the great Architect who has designed and plenished man's home for him. Economically speaking, it is incorrect to say that the land is limited in the sense that there is a deficiency in the supply, or that there is not enough of land to supply the demand. It is in this sense that the Economists wish us to believe that the land is limited. It is one of the entering wedges of a corrupt system of economy. It is made the excuse for all sorts of unrighteous claims. This alleged limit is one of the apologies advanced for the institution of Rent, though one would think it ought to be, if true, a very powerful condemnation of Rent. I can think of it as a good reason why two families should crowd upon the alleged narrow limits, and concentrate as much of their labor there as possible, so as to bring forth all that the land can yield, and leave no spare foot unilled; but I cannot, with the utmost stretch of my imagination, think of it as a reason why others should do the very reverse, and appropriate countless square miles of territory; or why one family should cease working altogether and compel another family to go upon the narrow limits which it is alleged are not enough for the support of one family, and compel that family so to toil as to support both families. For the sustenance of all, as every body knows, comes out of the land. But it is not true, as I have said, that there is any deficiency or limit. The wide world is enough and more than enough for every toiling hand to the end of time. And instead of there being what these Economists would have us to understand by a limit, there is enough and more than enough of land for tillage, of land for grazing, of land for garden and orchard, of land for beauty and delight to the children of men. Human architects may err—the Divine Architect cannot err.

Q. Has God then given to the people of England the land of England, to the people of Scotland the land of Scotland, to the people of Ireland the land of Ireland, just as freely as He has given to these nations the air they breathe?

A. He has.

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Q. Will the ousting of the people from their land, by whatever means accomplished, bring national decay?

A. It will.

Q. Has God dealt liberally with the human race not only with regard to the distribution, or extent of land, but also with regard to the capacity of land?

A. He has. I have myself cultivated fifty acres of land, and twenty acres, and have found in each case (Rent and Interest apart) ample sustenance. I have known a family find sufficient sustenance in two or three acres. Earth is a fruitful mother when justice is done to her. The difficulty is not in finding the reasonable and proper quantity of which to make public proclamation and division, but in restraining those who would monopolize an entire township or county to themselves.

Q. Is this notion of the Economists as to the limit of land a dangerous economic heresy, and to be carefully guarded against?

A. It is. We have designedly met it at the threshold of our enquiry in order that we may be placed upon our guard. Our design is to relegate every economic heresy to its proper place, *outside of political economy*. Our desire is to go on the straight line of truth; and this, with God's help, we shall endeavor to do throughout this important inquiry. I am aware that you will place before me questions of stupendous interest to the human family, and my earnest prayer is that I may be able to answer those questions *truthfully*, courting no favor, fearing no frown. May both of us be inspired as much with the dread of error as with the desire for truth.

Q. Is it right to discard English and other Statute-books in an inquiry like this?

A. I should be very sorry indeed to take any human Statute-book as my guide in questions of economic truth.

Montreal, 4<sup>th</sup> Nov., 1880.

THE LAND CATECHISM.

No. 2.

**NATURE'S GIFTS ARE FREE—HUMAN LABOR ALONE IS SALEABLE—ENOUGH FOR EACH, ENOUGH FOR ALL—GOD'S LAND LAWS KNOW NO LANDLORDISM—THE PURPOSE OF THE CREATOR—DIVISION OF THE SOIL AND LIMITED OWNERSHIP SET FORTH BY DIVINE EXAMPLE.**

QUESTION. You stated at our last interview that the land is the free gift of God—are not minerals, such as coal, iron, gold, silver, and also wheat, and cotton, and fruits, and grain—in fact all raw products—free gifts of God as much as the land?

ANSWER. They are.

Q. And you stated that on this ground, namely, that of a free and gratuitous gift, man could not sell the land—how, then, can he sell any of the materials of nature, such as indicated above, all equally the free gifts of God?

A. The question is most important, and involves a great economic truth. We must get hold of it and keep hold of it, as we go on with our inquiry. I have, on many occasions, endeavored to set forth this truth, and I am glad of the present opportunity of repeating and enforcing it.

My reply, then, to your question, is, that no raw products, no material gift of God, can ever be sold. That is to say, you cannot put a *price* on it with a view to selling it. The human labor embodied in the commodity is all that can be sold. You cannot say of any two of God's free gifts that they are the *economic equivalents* of each other. But a certain measure or quantity of human labor embodied in a commodity is the exact equivalent of a corresponding measure or quantity of human labor embodied in some other commodity. The sunshine is not the equivalent of the waterfall, nor the waterfall of the air, nor the air of the tree, nor the tree of the lump of gold, nor the lump of gold of the lump of iron. But the human labor embodied in a bushel of wheat is found to be the equivalent of the human labor embodied in two bushels of oats; and the labor in two bushels of oats of the labor in eight pounds of sugar; and the labor in eight pounds of sugar of the labor in half a dozen lengths of stovepipe; and the labor in six lengths of stovepipe of the labor in four-fifths of a silver dollar, and so on. Now, when, as an economist, I say that land as land cannot be sold, I mean nothing different even by an iota, when I say that iron as iron, wood as wood, gold as gold, grain as grain, fruit as fruit, cannot be sold. When you *price* an article, you are in reality pricing just the human labor embodied in that article.

Now, I enjoin upon land tillers and upon every worker to take hold of this truth. It is of the highest importance. We will constitute it our first grand stepping-stone. You must *think* about it. It will carry us safely through many an apparently complicated problem. *When commodities are sold, nothing but human labor can be sold.* Workingmen! I place it in your hands—a slaughter-weapon, as it were, before which countless economic errors will bite the dust.

Q. But is it not the case that Scripture commands that the land shall not be sold forever (Lev. xxv, 23), what it does not say in reference to any other material in this great creation on which man may exercise the cunning and ingenuity of his hand?

A. That is true. It is a unique command. It is a topic worthy of all consideration. Like many other things, we may not at this moment perceive its full practical import, and yet it may contain some hidden principle of deep and permanent interest to the human race. For example, God commands that the land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is his; and immediately reminds the people that they are but strangers and sojourners; which is an intimation to us that the fruitage of the land

must not be destroyed by rent or monopoly, and that the land is consecrated to the use and service of each succeeding generation—of permanent use to the race, of transient use to individuals of the race.

Q. Have we any example of the division of lands in past history which we may take as an authoritative expression of the Divine will on the subject?

A. Yes, one notable example—the division by lot of the land of Canaan among the children of Israel.

Q. Do you think it was the purpose of God in the division of the land of Canaan to give not only direct counsel to the children of Israel, but to reveal his will to all nations as to the principle on which the division of the land should proceed?

A. I think that is beyond all doubt. We must look upon it as God's command to all peoples for all time. It is a determinate expression of his will on a subject which embraces the very existence, happiness, peace, and well-being of the race. It is altogether in accordance with the natural impulses of humanity itself, and, so far as I can see, with every correct principle in political economy. We cannot escape the conclusion that it is against the express will of the Creator *that any man should possess more of this earth than that man and his family can cultivate and care for.* And surely nothing can be more significant than God's own division of his own land amongst his own children.

Q. Should not these considerations cause public teachers and others to be very cautious how they issue manifestos in favor even by implication of a system which, it is patent to all, is in complete violation of the expressed will of God?

A. Verily they should. I trust you and I would tremble to put pen to paper in furtherance of such work. Let us rejoice, however, that there have been, on the other hand, manifestos issued by illustrious men telling us not only what the Bible says, but also to some extent what political economy itself says. And the Bible and political economy, I am sure, will always be found to agree.

Q. Is it true, as urged by many expositors, that the Bible teaches no political economy?

A. Do not believe it. The Bible teems with it. Many would be glad if they could purge the Bible of its political economy.

Q. On what principle were the lands of Canaan divided?

A. The land was divided partially by Moses, and finally completed by Joshua in conjunction with the priests and the heads of the fathers of the tribes. It was divided by lot in portions to each family, and each portion to be the inheritance of each particular family. (Numbers xxxvi. 52-56).

“Divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance as I have commanded thee.”

“Divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes and the half tribe of Manasseh.”

“These are the countries which Moses did distribute for an inheritance in the plains of Moab.”

“When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.”—Deut. xxxii. 8.

The inheritance of the tribe of Judah was found to be too large, and it was subsequently divided and a portion of it given to the tribe of Simeon. The land reserved for the tribe of Dan, on the other hand, was found to be too limited in area, and the boundaries were subsequently enlarged.

Here we have the principle of the division:—

Of casting of the lot, as a solemn appeal to God.

God actually allocating the land.

Of equitable portions provided for every family—enough for each, enough for all.

Of the principle of **LIMITATION OF OWNERSHIP** and of settled and determined boundaries. The nations, in getting their inheritance, had “bounds” set to them according to the number of families to be provided for. Could a clearer declaration of the will of God be made to us as to the division of lands?

Every conceivable guard thrown out against the unhealthy acquisition of more than enough—every conceivable security thrown around the permanent occupation and inheritance of what was deemed sufficient.

Here, also, was a principle wholly just to unborn generations, securing them in the free and unfettered possession of their several portions of God's soil when they should come upon the stage of life. For the use of the land is for each generation, and for all of each generation as life goes on.

We must accept of it, at the same time, as a protest from the hand of God against the monopoly of land.

Q. Was this division of land on such a scale as to warrant us in assuming that it embodied general principles?

A. It was. Israel at that time numbered over six hundred thousand full grown men, and it was amongst this vast number that the lands were divided.

Q. But did not the people of Israel become heirs at the same time to lands long settled and tilled, and to all the appurtenances of houses, cities, villages, orchards, and so forth?

A. That could not alter the principle involved. That principle of equitable division is, if anything, rather strengthened by such considerations. Probably it was on the ground that the country was not in the condition of a primitive wilderness that division by lot was ordained—for "the lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty." If there is a religious principle embodied in this religious rite, why should Christian nations permit it to fall into total disuse? If it conveys a public or national recognition of a Divine Providence in the affairs of men, why should it fail to be adopted on suitable occasions? These thoughts in passing. The principle of allocating lands by lot, however, has never been entirely lost. It can occasionally be traced, I believe, to the present day.

Q. Viewed as a question of human labor, how were the lands divided?

A. They were not divided between landlords and tenants.

They were not divided between tenants and toilers.

They were divided amongst the tillers of the soil, and amongst the tillers by families.

If a division among landlords and tenants had been best, such a division would undoubtedly have been adopted.

If a division between tenants and tillers had been best, that division would have been adopted.

Here, then, we come to the fact that God's land laws did not recognize Landlordism.

And another fact, that God's land laws did not recognize what we understand by tenancy. And yet another fact, that God's land laws did not recognize Rents and Rental. For if the land belongs to the people, there can be no rent exacted from the people. That there can be no Rent where there is no Landlordism is a logical proposition beyond dispute.

Q. Does Political Economy, as well as God's land laws, fail to recognize Rents and Rental?

A. It does, thoroughly and completely, as I will fully show in the course of our discussion.

Q. If the division of the lands amongst landlords, to be let to tenants, and to be cultivated by tillers under the tenants, or by the tenants themselves, were the normal, healthful, and correct system of land tenure, would not that principle of division have been followed on this great national occasion of the allocation of the land of Canaan?

A. Undoubtedly it would.

Q. Was the system followed simply the best of several systems all more or less good, or was it the only equitable system to be adopted?

A. It was the only system in which equity, freedom, and public happiness could prevail.

Q. Was the system followed really a condemnation of the landlord system?

A. I view it in that light. All probability is violated if we look upon it as an approval of Landlordism.

Q. Why may we take it for granted that God forbade or condemned a landlord system of land tenure?

A. Because the system followed and the system you suppose are in complete antagonism to each other; and a system was promulgated calculated to secure the inheritance of *the people* in their lands, and at the same time to act as a barrier to what we understand by Landlordism and consequently to Rents and Rental.

Q. Did this system secure the fullest returns from the soil?

A. It secured *ample* returns from the soil for each and for all. It secured that the farmer should till *his* land and not the land of another.

Q. Did it secure the people from descending to the condition of serfs?

A. It did. Read Jeremiah, xxiv. 8-22, a peculiarly solemn and striking passage.

Q. Does the other system bring in a race of serfs?

A. Where there is Landlordism there must necessarily be serfdom.

Q. Do you think it is of any real utility that we should discuss points like these?

A. I think a nobler theme could not engage the attention of any thinker, and that there is not one of more practical utility for our race. What higher object of investigation than to search out the mind of the great Creator himself as to the tenure and disposition of the land that he has given to the family of man? I think it is of the supremest importance that the entire world should know **WHAT IS THE MIND OF GOD WITH REGARD TO THE TENURE AND DIVISION OF LAND.**

Montreal, 15th November, 1880.

## No. 3.

**GOD'S LAW AND THE SOIL.—IRELAND VOICING IT, AND IT WILL FILL THE WHOLE WORLD EVENTUALLY.—LAND AS LAND, CANNOT BE SOLD—THE RESULT OF HUMAN LABOR ALONE A MATTER OF COMMODITY—THE DIVINE WILL AS REVEALED IN THE BIBLE—TILLAGE ALONE GIVES TITLE, AND THE TWO CAN NEVER BE DIVORCED—EVICTION ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN BY SCRIPTURE—THE MEANS OF LIFE SHALL NOT BE TAKEN, IN ANY CASE, FROM ANY MAN.**

**QUESTION.** Is it not an evident design in this division of the land of Canaan that OWNERSHIP of the land and TILLAGE of the land are never to be divorced?

**ANSWER.** That is perfectly evident.

**Q. Why should this be so?**

A. Because ownership never produces—tillage produces. God has thus given a grand motto for the human race: *Let Tillage and Ownership ever go hand in hand.* In fact, this is the cry which, in the short space of twelve months, has shaken the race from its long night of slumber. Ireland, in this national demand, has but given voice to the law of God. It will increase till it fills the whole earth, for the security and prosperity of every nation is bound up in this law. Tillage and ownership have been joined together by the hand of God himself, and what God hath joined together let no man dare to rend asunder.

Q. Before we leave the point, permit me to ask if you have any collateral proof from the Bible as to this doctrine of the limitation of land in the hands of each tiller?

A. Yes, we have notable and powerful proof. Every fiftieth year was the year of Jubilee, when every man had the right to return to his possession. (Lev. xxv. 8-17, 25-34.) It was the institution of a law by which God not only at a stroke arrested the process of industrial decay, ^ 1 renewed to the nation, as it were, a new and long lease of life, but also arrested the process of unhealthy accumulation. It was a formidable but beneficent law which, at one sweep, took the very ground from under the feet of the men whose ambition and covetous desires regarded neither country, kith nor kin—men of the stamp so vividly set forth in the fifth chapter of Nehemiah, the *destoyer of the land*—and which threw wide the doors of the paternal home to every unfortunate who, by persecution, or knavery, or misfortune, had been driven forth as a wanderer and an alien. This law was the Magna Charta of Israel. The power of redemption, and that at any time, remained in the hands of those who had been so unfortunate as to temporarily lose their lands and their homes. In the case of the houses of walled cities, this power remained in the hand of the seller for one year and no longer. But in the case of houses in the villages, the power of redemption was the same as to the land, and such tenements, if not redeemed before, went out in the Jubilee. The reason of which is obvious. For the cultivators, frequently dwelling together in villages, a form of the ancient commune, the houses and appurtenances were in reality part and parcel of the farms, and were reckoned as such.

Q. Is this divine law a proof in support of the economic principle you have set forth, that land, as land, cannot be sold, and that it is really only human labor which can ever be sold?

A. To a certain extent it is. The conditions under which an Israelite had to arrange with the occupier of the paternal estate, if he desired to redeem before the arrival of the year of Jubilee, may be accepted as proof. The fruits of labor on the land, not the land itself, are amongst the things to be taken into consideration. It was a sale of houses, outhouses, fences, vineyards, olive-yards, orchards, and all

improvements made by human hands, just the same as any other sale, but subject to this law of redemption. Consequently, a calculation of the years of the sale was a necessary element in the negotiation. In this respect it was a unique sort of bargain, somewhat different from the sale of an ordinary commodity. Still it was, so far, a selling away of the patrimony—a bringing back of the patrimony. The Bible calls it a sale (Leviticus xxv. 15. Jeremiah xxxii, 6-12). The prices of all heritable property in the land of Israel would, to a certain extent, be affected by this law. If, at the period of forty years from the Jubilee, a man bought out an owner, compelled by misfortune to sell, he would pay down four-fifths of the value; at thirty years from the Jubilee, three-fifths; at twenty years, two-fifths; at ten years, one-fifth. If a freeholder desired to return to his possessions at say twenty-five years from the Jubilee, he would have to pay down one-half of the original valuation. The necessities of the case would, I suppose, compel this peculiar method of computation. The expression, "The land shall not be sold forever," evidently had reference to this great national law of the release of the fiftieth year, the *land* being taken as expressive of all that human labor had permanently placed upon it, and which might become objects of sale or barter.

Q. Did each family become the absolute owner of the land which fell to it by lot, and which that family cultivated for its sustenance?

A. To all intents and purposes the family became the owner. Even the power of the King could not dispossess a proprietor of his holding, though accompanied with an offer of large and liberal compensation (1st Kings, xxi. 3). He was dispossessed in the case referred to by an outward show of "law," but with what result to Ahab and his guilty Queen every reader of the Bible knows. It might not be amiss for the landlord Journals to dwell on this fact a little.

Q. Did this ownership proceed upon the assumption of a labor-right to the soil?

A. No; the soil itself is a gift, not a product of labor. Your right to the soil proceeds upon the assumption that, as one of God's creatures, you require a portion of the soil for your sustenance—enough, but not more than enough—and that the Creator makes over this portion as a free gift to you. If we call it *absolute ownership*, of course that expression must be qualified by the fact that everything we have comes from God, and that at best we have only the usufruct in life of all that we till or of all things our hands fabricate. The day is coming when humanity will stamp a fitting brand on the great crime of speculating in that which is the very ground-work of a nation's life, the land.

Q. Could an Israelite divorce himself of the rights which pertained to him by the year of Jubilee?

A. It does not appear that he could, unless the case of the boring of the ear through with an awl against the door-post may be interpreted as such (Exodus, xxi. 6).

Q. Did the release of all debts at the end of every seven years (Deut. xv. 1-6), embody the same principle as the year of Jubilee?

A. Yes; it is the same principle at work. Both were evidently designed as great national safeguards—a determinate period fixed when an absolute arrest should be placed upon the dark and treacherous schemes of men who, in their insatiable greed, would devour the very nation out of which they sprang. It was a national policy of great and constant power, retrospective as well as prospective in its permanent operation.

Q. Then, does it not appear that God designed that men should not permanently accumulate or monopolize land (over and above their natural share) even by the act of purchase or the process of buying?

A. Yes; the year of Jubilee broke the purchase. It appears that there is something so sacred associated with this homestead possession that even the ordinary rights of buying and selling must yield before it. The economic evils flowing from unlimited accumulation would be experienced as much through purchase as through forcible eviction. The manner of acquiring would be different, the *pres-*

sure would be the same. Of course we know well the sentiments of thorough-going monopolists on these points, sentiments only a degree worse than those of the wild and thoughtless demagogue. But the true economist, the wise statesman, the thoughtful patriot, cannot fail to perceive that never were more salutary laws imposed than those of the year of Jubilee and of the seventh year's release. There could not be nobler laws to protect the helpless and unfortunate on the one hand, and to restrain the crafty on the other. True freedom, love of home and country, are bound up with them. Look at them in whatever light we may, subject them to the closest analysis, we find that good, and nothing but good, springs out of them. Divorce men from the soil and true patriotism is gone. What interest have the people now in the soil of Great Britain? Just as little as have the naked savages who roam the wilds.

Q. Do you hold that the right of ownership depends on the capacity to till?

A. To a large extent I do. The command is—There is the land, make good your title by tilling it—not, There is the land, make good your title by not tilling it, or by ceasing to till, or by handing it over to another to till.

Q. Is it true, then, that those who cease tilling, or who never till, and yet retain ownership and rents, are a burden on society?

A. So far as relates to tillage and payment of rents out of tillage, that inevitably follows. If ownership produced, it would not be true—as ownership does not produce, it must be true. There is nothing clearer on the page of Scripture than that God designs the tiller to be the owner, and the owner to be the tiller. And each owner is to be the tiller, so as to encourage the production of sustenance for all the race, including every department of trade or handicraft. It is tillage, as I have said, which produces, and so it is evident that tillage and ownership are not to be divorced.

Q. If tillage and ownership are divorced, does rent arise?

A. A claim is then put forth for rent, and the tiller bears a double burden; or, to place it in another light, he loses half of the fruits of his toil, that is, if the landlord is content with only half of the fruits of the other's toil, a miracle in land rent which I suppose nobody has yet seen. A claim is made on the tiller on the ground of ownership alone—something is taken out of the pocket of the tiller *who produces all*, and is placed in the pocket of the owner, *who produces nothing*, for ownership does not produce. I have said “loses one-half,” but the real effects in the end are to be seen by comparing the condition of the family which draws in rentals with the condition of the family who does the tilling.

Q. Then do you hold that the people should occupy other peoples' lands and pay no rents?

A. No labor reformer holds such an absurdity. That is the silly argument of journalists who want to throw dust in the peoples' eyes. It seems to be so pleasant to garnish a newspaper article with so transparent a lie. We hold that every man should own his portion, and till his portion, and that there should be no such thing as rent contracts. For *rent* in its very nature is just another name for industrial oppression. Industry makes everything. It cannot make everything and also pay rent for everything. It will be destroyed if it does so. Our contention is against people taking possession of other people's lands, and not only crushing them down to serfdom, but compelling them to pay rent for that which is their own.

Q. Does the owner put any thing in the tiller's pocket?

A. Nothing. For the land cannot absolutely be owned except as it is tilled. It is the tillage which confers or ratifies ownership of the land. The continued existence of the ownership has its existence in the continued tillage. When tillage dies ownership dies. If a man got half a province into his possession and did not till it, society would have the right to take possession and allot it to tillers, in order that food might be provided for the nation. But if national laws give a man a right to 10,000 acres, they may give a right to 50 million acres. And so national laws would destroy the people they pretend to protect.

Q. Who makes all the improvements on the ground—the landlords or the tillers?

A. The tillers or the toilers.

Q. You view the tillers, the toilers, the farmers, the tenants, the laborers, all as one; do you not?

A. All as one. I look on labor alone, for labor is the source of production.

Q. Does not the owner give the use of the land to the tiller?

A. No; God only gives the use of the land. The use of the land is in the tillage of the land. The tillage of the land is the only title to the use of the land.

Q. Before going further into the economic argument, let us refer again for a moment to the Scriptures. May it not be well to consider what they have to say as to the taking of pledges?

A. It may. Let us seek for light wherever it is to be found. What is said on the subject is as follows: "When thou dost lend thy brother anything, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge."

"Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee."

"And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge."

"In any case, thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down: and it shall be righteousness to thee before the Lord thy God." Deuteronomy xxiv. 10-13.

"No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh a man's life to pledge!" Deut. xxiv. 6.

"Thou shalt not take a widow's raiment to pledge." Deut. xxiv. 17; Ezekiel xviii. 7, 12, 16; Amos 11, 8; Job xxii. 6, xxiv. 3, 9.

"If thou at all take thy neighbor's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: (What a grim rebuke is this to the taker of pledges!) "For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? And it shall come to pass when he crieth unto me that I will hear; for I am gracious." Deut. xxiii. 26, 27.

Some, and notably certain interpreters of scripture, will tell us these laws are for ignorant Jews, for ancient times, and not for intelligent Christians and "times of progress" like these. They will gloss the scriptures as they do when, in their efforts to justify usury, they tell us that God *permits* lending on interest to strangers, forgetting to tell us that God also absolutely *forbids* lending on interest to strangers.

You are not even to think of your money if it is a poor man's raiment, or *means of life*, that you have taken in pledge. It must be returned him "in any case" when the sun goeth down. Mark the words, *in any case*.

Q. But have these texts of scripture any relation to what we understand by evictions?

A. I think they have. They plainly tell us that God guards with jealous care a man's *means of life*. God will not hold you guiltless if you proceed to extremities against the poor and feeble, though you have all the statute-books of creation at your back. Take the case of a heartless landlord who proceeds to evict an entire parish. Having turned every family out on the roadside to meet its fate, can that landlord look up to heaven and say that he stands in a better or safer position than the man who sleeps with a poor man's pledge? or than the man who took the mill stones in pledge?

Will any Christian man dare to say, "I may not keep his raiment, or his bed-clothes wherein he sleeps, but I have the statute-books on my side for turning him and his wife and little ones out in the snow and rain?"

Will any Christian man dare to say that he may not take the last stone of meal from the starving family?

Will any Christian man dare to say that he may not take a widow's raiment in pledge, but that he may take her only cow or ox in payment of rent?

If you are commanded to return a man's raiment or bed-covering before the sun goes down, without a thought of the money in the hands of an unfortunate debtor, would you dare to turn a poverty-stricken tiller and his little ones out of their dwelling, and, it may be, raze that dwelling to the ground, every stone and timber of which may have been laid by that tiller's own hands? Is it not his covering? Where will he and his helpless ones sleep? Who will heal the broken hearts of the little ones as they yearn after "home," however humble that home may have been?

"When he crieth unto me I will hear."

Does he say he will hear? Has the long wail, the exceeding great and bitter cry arisen from that Green Isle beyond the sea, and God not heard it?

Here, then, we have human statute-books declaring that all this may be done; that it is all legal; that there is no sin or offence in doing such things.

And on the other hand, we have God's statutes declaring that it is at our peril if we do such things; that it is a heinous sin and flagrant transgression of God's law.

And again we have Christian journals by the hundred pouring out leader after leader to teach the people that the men who obey the human statute-books are on the right road, and that those who venture publicly to call them in question are only fit objects for fine, imprisonment or coercion. One may well tremble for our so-called Christianity when it is found in league with such iniquity.

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Q. Enough, enough. But surely you would not counsel or approve of violence on the part of the sufferers?

A. Never. Nothing can be really gained by violence, at least nothing in comparison with the victories gained by spreading the light of truth. Cannons and rifles may shoot down men, but they cannot shoot down principles. What concord hath violence with reason, the baton or the bayonet with the grand and peaceful principles of political economy? The very thought of violence in any form or from any quarter is to me utterly abhorrent. Still, when a badly constructed embankment has broken through, it is of no use standing preaching to the wild waters. Repair the crevasse, construct it on true and right principles, and you will find how smoothly and peacefully the waters will flow. I have no faith in the men who cry "shoot down the people first, and then we will repair the breach." The truth is, the people of Ireland have the master key in their own hands. The recent occurrences in County Mayo show that the people have a far more terrible power at command than rifles and buckshot—a power so withering, so irresistible, and yet so entirely within the lines of legitimate Christian defence, that those who fear not God nor regard man, if such there be, shall shrivel before it like the stubble before the flame. It is to all men a fearful warning of the power of an outraged community; a far more terrible rebuke than had all Ireland echoed with the shouts of combatants and the tramp of armed men. Those who are reading the signs of the times cannot fail to see that it is God's warning voice lifted up before all the nations. To the statesmen of England it says with solemn tones,—PAUSE AND THINK OF WHAT YOU ARE DOING.

With these scripture commandments before its eyes, the Church in Ireland would have proved a traitor to its God had it acted otherwise than it has done. Right nobly has the Irish priesthood stepped almost to a man into the breach on the side of God and in defence of outraged humanity. History will have no more inspiring record than what it will yet have to tell of such men.

Montreal, 7th December, 1880.

## No. 4.

## WHAT THE TALK ABOUT ABOLISHING ENTAIL AND PRIMOGENITURE AMOUNTS TO—NOTHING OTHER THAN CATCH-PENNY MAKESHIFTS TO PERPETUATE THE LANDLORD SYSTEM—AN INTERESTING INQUIRY AS TO WHERE THE MATTER OF RENT COMES IN—LANDLORD AND SERF BOTH VICTIMS OF A FALSE EDUCATION AND BAD SOCIAL SYSTEM.—“FREE CONTRACT,” SO-CALLED, AND THE DEGRADING APPELLATION “PEASANT” PROPRIETORSHIP.

Q. You stated in a previous interview, that the Economists hold that land is limited in the sense that there is not enough for the human family, and you gave your opinion on this point—does it not appear that the crowding of such a country as England justifies the position of the Economists?

A. No more than the crowding of the Black Hole of Calcutta, where so many prisoners perished in a night, would justify the notion that there is not enough of air for the human family. If the vicious economic system of England has reduced a multitude of its people to paupers, or next to paupers, or brought them into so low and servile a condition that they are unable to spread themselves abroad on new lands, would you blame the Creator himself, and say that too little land had been made for the race?

Q. Would the abolition of the laws of primogeniture and entail, and the simplifying of the deeds of transfer of land, cure the evils of landlordism?

A. These are all catch-penny arguments, and, like “absenteeism,” not worthy of a moment’s consideration, poor make-shifts in the mouths of those who stand forth in defence of the present system. Men who urge paltry matters like these have not touched the question at all. The law of primogeniture is as old as Moses, and necessarily flows out of, or rather accompanies, the law of the limitation of property. For, if one of the family is not to succeed to the landed inheritance, then you fall into the opposite error of subdividing the legitimate and healthful limits till the holdings become too small to support a family. Almost as serious an error as the grabbing of too much. And as to the law of entail, was not the year of Jubilee a powerful endorsement of that law? We want the people of a land rooted, as it were, in the soil. We want them in this respect fenced with safeguards in every direction. *There is no other cure for the land troubles of Britain and Ireland than to restore the means of life, the lands, to the people, the owners of the lands.* We do not want title deeds so simplified as to be an encouragement for the lands of a nation changing hands every day, like bank stocks and corporation shares. We do not want the heritable property of a nation thrown upon the wild sea of commercial traffic and gambling. It will be an evil day for a nation when such takes place.

Q. What is the first result of the accumulation of land in few hands?

A. One of the first results is *competition* for land for the purposes of cultivation. Men are defrauded of their own, of their natural rights, and are then compelled to pay tribute for the use of that which is their own. For, as the men who hold the land of a nation hold in their grasp the very life of that nation, and as the claim for food is a demand which cannot be arrested for a single day, *competition* for land for tillage becomes a necessary outgrowth of *accumulation* of land. Take the case of Ireland. 750 persons claim to own one-half of the whole island. 300 persons claim to own one-third of it. 2,000 persons claim to own over two-thirds of all the lands. About three millions of people are directly de-

pendent on these lands for a means of living. Viewed simply as a matter of commercial competition, it is as if three millions competed for what is held in the market by say 4,000 people, or as if 750 people competed for a barrel of flour, or other means of life, held by one individual. The system would not be true to itself did it permit the *actual tillers* of the soil in either Ireland, England, or Scotland, to rise above the position of slaves. The condition of the great body of the actual producers, as one constantly hovering between life and death, is a necessary outgrowth of the system of landlordism. As the system of lending on interest constantly forces the *artisan* population downwards towards the verge of poverty and want, so does the feudal or landlord system of Britain constantly force the *tilling* population down to the same wretched position.

Q. In the face of facts like these is it not absurd to talk of the renting of lands as being a free contract?

A. You might just as well talk of a famishing ship's crew handing over a bag of gold for a loaf of bread as being a free contract. The few thousands who have monopolized the lands of England, Scotland, and Ireland, hold a monopoly, so far, of the bread of the nation. You could not conceive of more utter slavery. I defy you to scheme out a system half so perilous, half so destructive of a nation's prosperity and happiness as this. You could not, with all your ingenuity, invent anything endowed with more withering and yet with such subtle powers of destruction. For it has about it elements so cunning and so plausible that multitudes of thoughtless people just accept of it as one of the conditions of human life and society, and so the nation consents to endure a sort of living death. And strange to say, sometimes the bravest advocates of the foul system are not amongst the oppressing classes, but amongst those who deliberately hold out their limbs to be fettered by it without a murmur or protest.

Q. How, then, does it come that good and patriotic men who have risen up to call public attention to such a state of things, and to denounce such a system, are threatened with the pains and penalties of public prosecution (or rather with a Government prosecution), and some of these the very men who have travelled thousands of miles and endured ceaseless labors, by day and night, to save a nation from perishing by famine?

A. You may well ask the question. Who is wise enough to answer it? It is one of those things before which the mind halts astonished; and we must just await the progress of events, those stern teachers before which all logic fails. There is a passage in Ecclesiastes v. 8 which exactly fits the case.

Q. Are you a believer in "peasant proprietorship"?

A. Pray do not let us defile our discussion with such a term. Let no words be employed calculated to degrade our common humanity. If we do we shall but degrade ourselves. Leave all that sort of thing to the admirers of landlordism.

Q. Are there not many excellent men who find themselves, by circumstances over which they have had no control, in the position of holders of vast tracts of land?

A. Undoubtedly. As to the system itself there is no manner of guilt to be specially attached to any one. But this does not alter or affect the economic conditions, and we are to treat these questions as matters of Political Economy, and therefore matters in which the entire nation has a living interest. Why should not a landlord as well as a poor tiller study out the *economics* of these great problems? Earnestly searching after truth is to be earnestly searching after God. It is a noble field open to landlords and tillers alike. And a Christian landlord, in reaching forth to these grand and inspiring truths, will find a pleasure far higher and purer than broad acres can ever yield. Landlords and tillers are all in unnatural positions, and I have equal respect and sympathy for both. To know the *economics* is to understand the moralities, and the rectitudes, and to experience the peaceful flow of a stream of living waters through the soul. Not to know the *economics* is to yield up the mind to a disordered thoroughfare of turbulence and strife. I am not speaking without due thought. I

repeat, to know the economies is to make earth below a pattern of heaven above, and to place mankind in full and perfect sympathy with the divine mind—to be ignorant of them is to hand us over, as a nation, to all that anarchy, strife, and confusion can bring forth.

Q. Do not these doctrines make war upon landlords?

A. Not in the slightest. They make no more war on the lords of the land, so called, than on the tillers of the land.

Q. How is that?

A. Because a faithful statement of economic truth never makes war on anybody—it makes peace. If tillers or landlords are in a true position, no economic truth can ever do them hurt; if they are in a false position, economic errors will never save them.

Q. Is there a distinctive thing called RENT?

A. There is not.

Q. Is there not a portion of human labor called rent?

A. There is not.

Q. Or to be more explicit, is there not a portion of the fruits of human labor called rent?

A. There is not. The fruits of human labor are the rewards of human labor; and as the exertion, the sweat, the toil, proceed from one man, the fruits of that toil must come unbroken to the one man.

Q. To establish such a position, it appears to me incumbent on you to show that no equivalent can ever be given for the sums of money received in name of rent. Are you prepared to take such a position?

A. I am prepared. We shall come to it in due time.

Q. Suppose that you really prove your position to be correct, what becomes of the vast sums paid continuously under the name of rent? To whom do they belong? Where, and to what account, are they to be credited?

A. I am prepared to show you, to prove beyond all doubt, that all sums paid under the name of rent **MUST GO AS THE PURCHASE MONEY, OR AS PART OF THE PURCHASE MONEY, OF THE PROPERTIES FOR WHICH THIS SO-CALLED RENT IS PAID.**

Q. *If that be true*, then rent has received its death-wound. I know that Political Economy is called "the dismal science," and that it is to this day in an unsettled state. It becomes me therefore to listen, to weigh, to consider well, before I reject an economic statement simply because it is not on the popular side. Supposing your position correct, do you hold that properties should be thus acquired—that is, by continuous yearly or half-yearly payments such as we call rent?

A. Certainly not. Property, when bought, should be paid for when the property is handed over.

Q. If not paid for at the time, does not the property become more valuable? If payment is withheld, or payments made by instalments, ought not more money to be given?

A. It is certain that your *not* paying to-day does not make the property more valuable to-morrow—not paying till *next month* does not make the property more valuable *next month*. In fact all property deteriorates with the lapse of time. Failing to pay at once will neither make a thing more than it is worth, nor enable you to pay more than it is worth.

Q. That seems so clear that one cannot deny it. But how does it come that my property—my house, for example—is not more valuable if you take ten or twenty years to pay for it?

A. Observe, I do not say any one *ought* to take twenty, or ten, or five, or one year, or one month, to pay for it. But if you do take ten or twenty or a thousand years to pay for it, the property does not, therefore, become more valuable. There is a certain amount of human labor embodied in the property when built, and there is no more in it at the end of ten or twenty years. So that Industry is

**Q.** *unable to pay more for the property. In a word, the human labor embodied in the property is there, neither less nor more; and in all probability it will take just the same human labor repeated to build another similar house; and you cannot, by any magic, take more than that human labor out of it, call it purchase money, rent, or any name you like.*

**A.** *But I am deprived of my money, and I can use the money to advantage if I had it, could I not?*

**A.** *You ought not to be deprived of your money; that is to say, it should be an exchange of value for value, then and there. But money produces nothing—it is absolutely unproductive—therefore, nothing can be got out of the money but the value of the money. You can only *buy* with the money, and buying is never producing.*

**Q.** *Does not money build houses, railways, bridges and so forth?*

**A.** *O dear no. Human labor, human beings, build houses, railways, bridges, and so forth.*

**Q.** *Does not money pay for bridges and railways?*

**A.** *No more than bridges and railways pay for money.*

**Q.** *Ah! I perceive that popular errors on these great questions are sown broadcast like grain. Are there not tens of thousands around us, especially of the mercantile class, who would instantly tell you that money *does* everything?*

**A.** *Aye, and hold to it with a grip like death. Their education in error is so complete that they substitute money which produces nothing, in the place of labor which produces all. Buried as they are all the day in money transactions, it is only men of powerful and independent minds who can lift themselves above the darkness and delusions with which they are surrounded. But you cannot get quit of economic truth—it lives and for ever lives; and nations which ignore it will only find themselves harassed to death, and plunged into constant panics and distraction.*

**Q.** *I must ground my claim for rent, then, on the fact that one *uses* my property, and I must be paid for the use. Is not the claim a proper one?*

**A.** *I confront this position with a great economic truth—that the human race, as represented by Industry, cannot make things and also pay for the use of things; cannot fashion all its tools (known by the commercial world under that delusive name, Capital), and yet pay continuously for the use of its tools; cannot build houses for its shelter and yet pay constantly for the use of the houses it builds; cannot raise a barrel of flour, and yet pay for the use of a barrel of flour; cannot build shops, factories and mills, and yet pay forever for the use of shops, factories and mills.*

**Q.** *You hold, do you not, that industry alone produces all these things, shops, flour, tools, &c?*

**A.** *Unquestionably.*

**Q.** *And do you hold that industry, if it be reduced to a position in which it can never *own* these things, and must, by necessity, be compelled to pay continuously for the *use* of those things, that, in such a case, industry also *produces* all the rents?*

**A.** *That result is inevitable, for you can get nothing except out of industry. Industry gives, as it were, double toil over the same article. It builds a house and then pays eight or ten years' rent for the house, and yet never owns the house. And at the end of eight or ten years, it begins a second payment for the house under the name of rent, and yet never owns the house. And so the owner has, at the end of sixteen or twenty years, got into his possession two more houses, and yet has done no work, that is, *produced nothing*. Toil has made it all. It is as plain as the day-light, that the houses of a city or town, under such a system, must inevitably fall into the hands of the few, and the people become dishomed.*

**Q.** *Then, is *use* gratuitous?*

**A.** *Use is gratuitous. That is, industry cannot be at the toil of raising and constructing all it makes, and then be compelled to toil a second time for the *use* of all it makes. *The use is free, not to the idler, but to the toiler or producer.**

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Q. If these things be so, I confess I am thoroughly cornered. I perceive that economic truths are invested with powers which cannot be set aside. And yet, I am challenged by the question, Ought people to occupy houses, shops, factories, and yet pay no rent for them?

A. We hold that it would be an unnatural position were people to occupy the property of others and pay no rent for the same. But that is not the question. It does not come before us at all. We never advocate such a thing as your question suggests. We advocate that industry, represented by the persons of the toilers, should occupy its own houses, shops, factories, and so forth, and never need to pay what is known as rent for *the things of its own creation*. If it seem a strange thing to propose that people should occupy others' dwellings without paying rent (a thing that no labor reformer has ever proposed) I put it to you, as a reasonable man, is it not a far stranger thing that industry should erect all the buildings in a city, and yet be "on the street," that is, have no dwelling it can call its own—industry producing all, and yet unsheltered and homeless?

Q. But is not industry paid for erecting all these buildings?

A. *Industry is not paid, under this modern system of commerce, for erecting these buildings.* If industry were truly paid, industry would own and occupy its own dwellings, factories, &c. We would not see the house property of a city owned by a few, and the multitudes houseless and homeless; the goodly farms owned by a few landlords, and the thousands of tillers landless and wretched. The houses, the shops, and the factories, are the products of industry; and if it got these products would it be houseless? Would it need to spend further labor forever in making up rents? Or if industry, in the person of the toilers, got the full value of these buildings, do you think we would see it the wretched, miserable, homeless outcast that we now everywhere find it? Wages paid are the merest fragment of the products of industry. The entire modern industrial system is at fault.

Q. Your questions indeed involve most serious considerations. The interests at stake are stupendous beyond all reckoning, nothing less than the weal or woe of the human race. It is not alone an Irish question, it is a world's question. Has there been no evidence that the public mind of England is beginning to awake?

A. There has. A writer in one of the London Reviews, the Rev. Mr. Zincke, has recently contributed an article on the subject, headed, "A Dishomed Nation." Though he does not touch the economic causes of this dishoming of the people of England, I doubt not thousands of readers have been led to ponder the matter, and to ask themselves why they have not homes.

Q. Ought not statesmen to study out these questions?

A. No man can properly rule a country who is ignorant of these questions. Political Economy itself, the very meaning of the words in the Greek, involves all that concerns the progress and happiness of a nation. But unfortunately statesmen do not seem to give any heed to these great questions. Their statesmanship at present seems to lie in the direction of doing their best to drive the country into civil war; slaughtering poor colored people; threatening peaceful villages with mighty iron-clads; bullyragging poor, bewildered Turks; burning defenceless Afghan and African villages; and slaughtering unhappy women and little children; decorating with gaudy ribbons men who are red with the blood of their fellows; rectifying frontiers by stealing other peoples' lands; driving legitimate monarchs from their homes to wander into the wilderness and die of a broken heart; introducing elements of hatred, discord, and civil war into peaceful communities; driving their own people to desperation, and yet constantly advising other nations how to conduct their affairs; heaping more and more taxes on a wearied and bewildered world; and calling on humanity in general to stand still and see with what perfect precision all this fine work can be done, and not a line of the statute-books violated, not a spot left upon the ermine of the "Law."

Q. Don't you think it is high time we should all be done with this hateful gospel of violence and wrong?

A. To crown all, statesmanship, when outraged humanity ventures to protest, cries out to that humanity to keep quiet, to bow down its neck till all the world has seen how statesmanship can ride rough-shod over that neck ; and that then, after the world has seen what it can do, *after* it is fully convinced that it can really *do* all these wicked things, it will put matters all to right by a little tinkering with certain law books ! And so, *the last error is worse than the first*. And this is " Statesmanship."

You are right, humanity is tired, is getting utterly wearied with this sort of gospel. This coercion cry is enough to disgust the world.

Q. Do you think humanity will ever be put right by this sort of process, endeavoring to compel obedience to bad laws on the ground that these laws will be afterwards tinkered ?

A. Never. It insults humanity to its face. All history condemns the impious supposition. Common sense condemns it. Christianity condemns it. The promptings of our common humanity condemn it. The operations of the very forces of nature condemn it. It is the devil's way to forge his chains the tighter around men's limbs. It is a doctrine which says, as plainly as words can utter it : Let us make of the earth a desert, and then we shall begin to set our wits to work to schedule man into his proper position in the order of nature—let us destroy with a view to save. Reformation will save, but violence and destruction must, in the end, issue in bringing ruin on the heads of the evil doers. Men will never submit to this process of cure, and it is well that they should not.

Q. To turn now to the land, let me ask : May not a portion of the produce of the tiller be taken from him on the ground that another man owns the land ?

A. It cannot. No man *owns* the land as land. No man *made* the land. No man *worked* for the land. It is a gift from God, and God's free gifts cannot be sold.

Q. Well, admitting this to be true, may not rent be taken from him on the ground of another owning the improvements on the farm ?

A. The landlords, as a rule, never made these improvements. They have all been made by the tillers of the soil.

Q. Do you say that a landlord who has paid for improvements out of his rents has not paid for them out of his own pocket ?

A. I mean to say that exactly, neither less nor more. The improvements have all been made out of the tiller's own pockets. If that has not been known hitherto, it is high time that the world should know it. The buildings, fences, plantations, drains, the removal of rocks and stones, the mellowing of the soil by repeated culture, all is the product of the toil of the tillers.

Q. But does not English law say that the rents are the property of the landlords ? And does not the contract between landlord and tenant accept of this ?

A. I am not discussing English law or saying a word about it, good, bad, or indifferent. I am endeavoring to shew what political economy teaches, and what all human law, therefore, *ought to be*. Political economy represents all that is good for a nation. It is really, in a certain aspect, *a man's life, a nation's life*. If a tiller enters into a contract to give away his means of life, that tiller will suffer for it. More than that, the nation which submits to it will suffer for it. If human statute-books and this divine economy are in mortal conflict (as I hold they are) the sooner we have the bonfire in the market place of Ephesus repeated the better.

We will continue the subject at future interviews. I will try to present the matter in different aspects and lights. We will spare no pains to bring out the truth in relation to subjects of such surpassing interest to the human family. And at our next meeting I hope we shall investigate what the economists of England have to say in justification of rents of land.

Montreal, 20th December, 1880.

## No. 5.

MAN JUST AWAKENING TO THE GRANDEST SELF-EVIDENT TRUTHS.—NO COMPENSATION BUT FOR VALUE.—THE LANDLORD HAS ADDED NO VALUE TO THE SOIL—THEN WHERE DOES HIS CLAIM COME IN?—THE TILLER'S RIGHT ONLY SOVEREIGN.—THOSE WHO HAVE ROBBED THE LABORER THROUGH RENT ARE SOCIETY'S DEBTORS, AND IT IS FOR THEM TO MAKE RECOMPENSE.

Q. I think it is beyond all controversy that a human being, by the fact of his birth, has a claim to a share of the land—that it is his inalienable birth-right. Permit me now to ask:—If a person, in coming up to manhood, takes up some other profession or handicraft, has he a claim on society to receive the value of the land or of the share relinquished?

A. No.

Q. Why not?

A. Because he has really relinquished nothing. There is no labor *value* in the land till toil is given. He has placed no value in it. He has made no improvement with the labor of his hands. And if he has placed nothing in or on the land, it is absolutely certain he relinquishes nothing. The right to labor for his living is still his, and the tiller of land has no more than the right to labor for his living. The materials of God's creation are all as free to the artisan as to the tiller. The artisan will enjoy the fruits of his toil—the tiller enjoys no more. And under a true economic system all the material, the free gifts of God to man, would come to the hand of tiller and artisan alike, unloaded with any tax of monopoly and absolutely free of every burden; the *human labor* in the article, or spent on the material, being all that would be priced, all that anybody would be called to pay for. So it is plain that the artisan who prefers some other means of livelihood than tillage relinquishes nothing for which society owes him a single cent, for nobody debars him from the land, and he has lost no labor or fruits of labor.

Q. Does not this doctrine make a terrible inroad on the claims of men for compensation for lands in which they never invested so much as one day's toil?

A. That cannot be helped. We must follow truth, economic truth, wherever it leads. Be true to political economy, and we will be true to ourselves. It is a wonderful system of spontaneous truth, and the present agitation all over the world as to LAND is just the awakening of the human mind to some of the grandest problems in this science. When statesmen thoroughly understand the principles of political economy the reign of violence and destruction will be at an end. How august, then, the questions which the IRISH WORLD has labored so earnestly, so faithfully, and with such wonderful success to bring to the front.

Q. Well, does not the man I refer to make some sort of surrender? Does he not lose his gift, God's portion of land to him?

A. No. The gift is there if he likes to take it. That he prefers some other avocation than land tilling is proof that he expects a sustenance out of something else than land tilling. If he does not choose to take up his portion, why should you, a land tiller, or anybody else, pay him any recompense on that ground? Or, if, on the other hand, shutting his eyes to the claims of his fellows, he has grabbed more than his portion, why should the despoiled make any recompense to the spoiler? Should it not be the other way?

Q. Is a man who has seized more than his portion and who has done no work on that portion, and yet demands that society should recompense him for relinquishing, or rather restoring, that portion, in the position of the individual to

whom we have just referred, who demands from society some sort of compensation for not taking up his portion on the ground of his following some other occupation?

A. He is, if anything, in a worse position. For the other has never taken possession of any portion, but this man has taken possession of perhaps ten, or a hundred or a thousand times more than his portion, and so has despoiled tens or hundreds or, it may be, thousands of his fellow-men.

Q. Is not, then, that man largely in debt to society, or to somebody?

A. If, under the name of Rent, he has drawn out of others' toil for the possession of lands to which he had no economic right, he is an economic debtor to society or to somebody. We cannot escape that conclusion. Government cannot give away the people's lands. They cannot give a *title* to wild lands. The land is the tiller's by right of tillage. There and only there is the real and substantial title to land. I repeat what I wrote on this subject twenty years ago—"a squatter's right is a sovereign right." Governments may attempt to trample under foot the inalienable rights of unborn generations by the issue of parchment patents to speculators in land—these generations, when they come upon the scene, will treat your patents as so much waste paper. For you cannot always thus disinherit humanity. Any act, though done by Government, disinheriting future generations of their lands, is *null and void* from the moment of its conception. God has provided an ample world for the home and happiness of the race he has created, and a Government which thus dishonors humanity is perpetrating a great wrong, may I not say a great crime?

Q. Should all land, then, be surrendered?

A. No; only that which belongs to society. A man's portion—even a land-grabber's—must be left to him—his own, but not another's. Enough, plenty for his use, but not what he cannot use. The man's own good and happiness are bound up in this, as much as the good and happiness of the community.

Q. A question strikes me at the moment, and one, it seems to me, of very great importance at present. Can we really estimate in definite sums of money, or in so many "years' purchase" as it is called, the value say of 200 acres of *land*, which is able to sustain a large family establishment for thousands of years or from the beginning to the end of time?

A. Doesn't it seem utterly absurd? Only think of people gravely telling us that this block of wild land, with all its endless resources, is worth, per acre, a bit of yellow metal we call a dollar! That a block of land capable, with the aid of labor applied to it, of sustaining in succession family after family in comparative comfort and independence for thousands of years, is of the value of five or six or ten or twenty dollars!! If, by its value, they mean all its wonderful and productive energies for all time, then they cannot price it—if, by its value, they mean the value of human labor spent on it, as little can they price it, for no human labor yet exists there.

Q. Would these land doctrines in full sway benefit all traders and artisans?

A. Just think of the healthy, steady, and abundant trade and recompense secured to all by the lands being owned by the men who till them, compared with the unhealthy and precarious trade of a country fostered by a Landlord aristocracy; millions of money spent on gambling, horse racing, fox hounds, liveries, gew-gaws, and all sorts of fanciful rubbish, and that stilted and stagey literature provided by literary scatter-brains for the amusement of "society." Think of the change in every department of trade, and especially for the good of the smaller tradesmen scattered throughout the country, were those millions diverted into healthy and honest channels, instead of being used, as now, to foster every form of social vice and disease. Think of the trade sustained by millions of substantial freemen and freeholders, compared with what is demanded by millions constantly hovering on the verge of pauperism. Why, your trade would be measured by all the distance between millions of substantial yeomen and millions of poor, shivering, disinherited beggars.

Q. Let me quote a passage from J. S. Mill, and ask your opinion on it: "But, iniquitous as it is, yet, when the state has expressly legalized it, and human beings have, for generations, been bought and sold, and inherited under sanction of law, it is another iniquity to abolish the property without full compensation. This wrong was avoided by the great measure of justice in 1833, probably the most virtuous act, as well as one of the most practically beneficent, ever done, collectively, by a nation?"—MILL, *Principles of Political Economy*, Book 2d, Cap. 2d, Sec. 7.

A. Now, no one can have greater respect than myself for the name and memory of John Stuart Mill. But so far from agreeing with the sentiments of the above quotation, it is my full conviction that a more vile, a more iniquitous public act, could not have been perpetrated than to take some twenty millions of pounds sterling out of the hard toil of the working men of Britain, and hand the same over to slave-holders as compensation for having held their fellow creatures in slavery. It was condoning, as far as money could condone, all the horrors of that awful traffic. It proclaimed, as far as a public act could proclaim, that men might perpetrate the most dreadful crimes and expect "compensation" for the same. What perilous teaching! It was the deepest insult cast where insult should, of all places, never fall—in the face of those drinking deep of the cup of affliction. If ever a man is in peril it is when he casts reproach upon the suffering poor; and for this reason I tremble for those who give themselves over to nothing but sneers for the Irish race in its deep and long affliction. The West India Islands have not prospered much since the payment of that money. The annual produce of the Jamaica sugar estates fell from 150,000 to 20,000 hogsheads.

Q. Who should have got the money?

A. It ought to have been set aside for the benefit of those who had been so deeply wronged, the slaves.

Q. On the basis of Griffith's valuation, what would it require to buy out the landlords of Ireland?

A. Let us add, say, only 50 per cent. to Griffith's valuation, and we have an annual rental of over 80 millions of dollars. Take 10 years' purchase and you have 800 millions of dollars. Take 15 years' purchase, and you have 1,200 millions of dollars. Apply the rule to England and Scotland as well (and I am very sure that in the present temper of the times you would have to so apply the rule right speedily), and it would take all the money of Britain a hundred times told to buy out the landlords. It will never be done, for it cannot be done.

Q. Do you hold that the present land system of Great Britain is a total destruction of territorial rights?

A. I do. The destruction of the territorial rights of the people could not be more complete. Of course a House of Territorial Lords is the rivet which holds this vile and wretched system from falling to pieces. Land tenure is in ruins and must be rebuilt from the foundation.

Q. Should compensation be accorded to those who claim vast tracts of land when society calls for the surrender of the same?

A. Society in that case calls but for the surrender of its own. I interpret the laws of political economy on the same principles as a judge on the bench would interpret the laws of England or of America. I am debarred from any other course. I look into the record. The laws of political economy declare with consenting voice that compensation must come from those who have done the wrong, those who have violated economic laws either knowingly, thoughtlessly or ignorantly. What would be expedient is a different question. If there is a fund set apart for the purpose of compensation for landlords—if such a fund exists—out of which you can take the necessary thousands of millions of dollars without taking further contributions or taxes out of the toilers' pockets, and if nobody else has so good a claim to that fund as the landlords, then liberal compensation might be given.

Q. Do you hold then, that taxes can come out of nothing but labor?

A. Of course I do. Taxes can come out of nothing but toil. Industry pays them all. Multitudes, in their ignorance, think that taxes come out of lands, houses, factories, goods, and so forth. You may hear "statesmen" any day talking even of wild lands paying taxes.

Q. If compensation is to be given, should it be given to the spoiler or the despoiled, to those who have done the wrong or to those who have suffered wrong?

A. To that question both moralist and economist can have but one reply.

Q. Then are we hedged up to this question—Are the people who demand back their lands, their means of life, the spoilers? or are the few who find themselves by one way or other, even though it be by purchase, the monopolists of the entire lands of a nation, the spoilers?

A. That seems the question, and there you have run it to earth.

Q. Would it be proper or improper, right or wrong, to take thousands of millions of dollars out of the peoples' toil and hand them over as compensation for the lands of a nation, the titles to which do not rest on tillage at all, but mainly on acts of brutal violence or the sword?

A. Could you remedy a vast economic wrong by doing a second vast economic wrong? Shall we attempt to undo the work of tyranny and brutal force by beginning to play the fool? Could you correct the drainage of a nation's land by substituting the drainage of a nation's money? Would not a people be smitten with madness who made the attempt to recover its lands by voluntarily surrendering all its money? Would you subdue the oppression by substituting another form of oppression? Would you try to get quit of one peril by bringing forward a new and fresh peril? Could you purge out a mortal disease by planting in your system another just as bad?

Q. Would the nation resuming its lands imply confiscation, or restoration?

A. It would necessarily imply *restoration* of that which had been confiscated. I suppose nobody denies that the lands were confiscated. It is a historic fact. But you cannot confiscate a nation's land, the source of its life, without destroying that nation. You see it is ever an economic question. Politicians may seek to attach to it questions of politics, but the economic factor is the force which always comes in with its resistless claims.

Q. What do you think of "fixity of tenure" as a proposed cure?

A. Fixity of tenure! all rubbish, the veriest rubbish. We had fixity of tenure, so-called, all over the south of Scotland, where I was brought up. Leases ran generally for twenty-one years. We were rarely if ever called to witness such a thing as an eviction. The farm servants, the tillers of the soil, were called *Hinds*, and a more honest, upright, and industrious class never lived. But they were all just hovering on the verge of poverty—the poor young women doing men's work in the wet, muddy fields, were well called, in farm language and farm contracts, "bondagers." They all struggled on in their cheerless and hopeless lives, from father to son, from the cradle to the grave. Honest they were, but we want something better now than honest clods of the valley. That is not the type of manhood for the coming day. Depend upon it, the coming day will not have him. And then, recollect, that in asking me this question, you ask me what I think of "fixing" in the vitals of the nation the very poison which is corrupting the national life. You ask me what I think of perpetuating the economic vice that is now called forth in the face of all the world to give account of the tens of thousands of hearths it has made desolate, of the hundreds of thousands of homes and families it has ruined and destroyed. For the lowliest cottage on the bleakest hill in Connemara is to me as sacred as the lordliest mansion in all England. And if it should ever be my lot to enter one of these humble dwellings, I shall uncover my head with all the more reverence, just because of the terrible wrongs which have been experienced there. Ask the millions of Irishmen in this free western world what they think of the hollow cry of fixity of tenure, fair rents, and freedom of sale. With one voice they will give you a reply. Perhaps it is well for the peace of the world that the broad Atlantic rolls between Ireland and her expatriated sons.

MONTREAL, 6th January, 1881.

## No. 6.

HOW NICELY NATURE REGULATES HUMAN CAPACITIES.—NO DOING OF TWO THINGS AT ONCE.—NATURAL CHECKS UPON UNHEALTHY ACCUMULATION—OLD-TIME VILLAGE COMMUNITIES.—THE “OVER-POPULATION” BUGBEAR IN IRELAND.—HOW THE WRONGFUL ENJOYERS OF A NATION’S PATRIMONY SEEK TO PROPAGATE UNTRUTH.—WHAT THE “RIGHTS OF PROPERTY” REALLY ARE.—THE TOILER ALONE HAS SUCH “RIGHTS,” AND THE VIOLATION IS IN TAKING HIS PRODUCTIONS WITHOUT RENDERING EQUIVALENT.—SCRIPTURAL TEXTS AND THE SOIL.

QUESTION.—Suppose, now, that I am a blacksmith by trade, could I not have my share of land and also work at my trade?

ANSWER.—The special work in which you are engaged is a limit to your toil. You could not do a whole day’s work at your trade and also fill up that day with farm work. In the village communities in olden times, and even up to recent times, many persons followed their special trades, and owned and cultivated, at spare hours, their little patches around the towns and villages. All over the south of Scotland, where I spent my youth, this was the case. A great many of the different artisans had their acre, half acre, or small patch, which they cultivated in the long summer evenings, a source to the family at once of pleasure and profit. Here, you perceive, the limit of capability of toil is still in force, and proves the sure check upon unhealthy accumulation. Just compare these happy village communities with the demoralizing and degrading scenes of modern factory life. The power-loom, in supplanting the hand-loom, has in too many instances done so at the cost of demoralizing the artisan’s home. Alas! for the young lads and maidens who are born to such a fate.

Q. I hear it often said that the supply of land in Ireland is not equal to the demand. Is it so?

A. The supply is abundantly equal to the demand, for Ireland could support in great comfort many more inhabitants than it has at present. But when the lands are held by a few landlords, it will appear to them and their fellows as if the demand were greater than the supply; just on the same principle as, were you to hold all the food of a city, you would think there was a great demand for it when you saw the clamorous crowd around your door; and doubtless you would flatter yourself into the belief that the supply was not equal to the demand, and so would quadruple the price. If one man held all the flour of a city, doubtless he would experience a great demand for it. And so, the fact that a large number have to crowd the office of the landlord for permission to till their own lands has given birth to this silly cry of over-population and scarcity of land.

Q. How is it, then, that I read in so many of the English Reviews that the demand for land in Ireland is greater than the supply?

A. The Reviews must explain their own rubbish, I cannot. It serves its purpose, however, in poisoning the minds of a certain class in England, a class whose prejudices form but a poor barrier against the delusions which appear to them so plausible.

Q. There is a great deal of outcry about the rights of property. What should we learn first regarding these rights?

A. If inanimate things, such as bits of soil, gravel, sand, stone, and so forth, can be said to have any rights (which to me seems absurd) surely we may imagine every morsel of that soil becoming vocal, and protesting against the monopolizer laying upon it an unhallowed hand. One who has monopolized, by any means,

the broad acres of his fellowmen should be the last to utter a word about these so-called rights of property. If you want to examine into the rights of property as an economist should examine, begin with the toiler, or, in other words, with the rights of man. Rights can only follow our properties, as these properties have come into our possession as the fruits of our toil, or as the fruits of the toil of those from whom we have inherited them. It is only the toiler who has any "right" in the property he creates. If that property is taken from him by cunning, wit, force, or fraud, and without a *full* equivalent being rendered to him, that man's rights and the rights of his property have been violated.

Q. What if I have bought property with money?

A. The property is, or ought to be, the fruit of your toil, for money is, or ought to be, the fruit of your toil. You see how thoroughly the laws of political economy drill us always into the right road. We can't escape them, do our best.

Q. Not as the fruits of our wit, or scheming, or cunning, or cornering?

A. Nay, verily. As the fruits of human toil or labor.

Q. As the fruits of mental toil?

A. Yes, if you can shew that the men who made over to you the seen and substantial things, the work of the hand, have received from you an equivalent value in the unsubstantial and unseen things, the work of the brain—and if you can show the reciprocal and equitable action by which the mental product alone can be exchanged for the good things of this life, which are all the produce of hand and brain combined; for every worker with his hand employs the brain while he works. And if you can show to us (what **MUST** follow such an exchange if it be an exchange at all) the toilers all changing places with the men of wit and cunning, the brain men and the brain men stepping all into the places of the toilers. For, if the workers with hand and brain give away their seen products under contract to receive from you the unseen thoughts of your brain, and do not receive these thoughts; or, if these thoughts can never, in the nature of things, be an exchange at all for the fruits of hand and brain combined in the one person of the toiler, then you are robbing toil, taking its products and giving nothing in exchange. And it is also beyond contradiction that the man who says he is giving his brain work in exchange for hand work from men who, as he alleges, have given no brain work over their work, is stating an untruth, so far as the brain work of the producers is concerned. For I suppose I am correct in saying that nowhere is thought and mental attention more active than when the artisan and toiler are pursuing their occupations. This notion that some men should be paid enormous sums for doing the thinking (though how *to do* thinking is the puzzle), and that the millions of toilers should be regarded as senseless machines to whom a bone may be thrown in recompense, is all rubbish. What good would a physician's thinking do to a dying man at whose bed-side he sat were there no doing along with the thinking? And what good would my thinking do to the physician, were I a laboring man, unless there were doing along with my thinking? And it is beyond contradiction that the man who says he gives over the contents of his brain to the toilers on condition of receiving the greater part of the produce of these toilers, and these men have never any one's brain but their own, is defrauding labor of its rewards. Are not the working men in every department of labor, who feed and clothe humanity and decorate it with everything that is glorious and fair to see, are not these, I ask, the brain workers, the true brain men? I would not dishonor the term by calling those who live by their wits and their schemes brain men at all. There are problems for you—solve them if you can. I fear Political Economy itself, however far afield you went in search, would fail to afford you even so much as a platform on which to begin your work. Well do I know, however, that many a vain man thinks he can unravel it all in half a dozen lines, or in five minutes reflection, or in ten minutes talk.

Q. But is it true that employers are always occupied teaching the workers, the employees, how to do the work?

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A. Let us face the truth. *It is not true.* The converse is the truth. If men could not do their work they would not long be found at their work. Employers may say to workmen what they want done. But it is beyond question, if there be teaching at all in the case, that the men who *do* the work are, every hour of the day, instructing those who stand idly by, or who do not *do* the work, if they will receive or desire to receive instruction. All this talk about people getting paid for brain-work out of the toil of those who employ both hand and brain, is the merest moonshine. Industry needs no supervision outside of itself—it can never afford to pay for any claim for such alleged supervision—its call to every man able to work is to put out hand and join the ranks and fall to—every man needful for the work, and working singly or in co-operation, must receive for *the produce of his toil*, and for no more—those who hire workingmen have no more right to take from the toil of these workingmen than slaveholders have to take away the fruits of the toil of slaves. Many honest employers, under our present unhappy system, know this and admit its truth; and many a noble "employer of labor" laments over it, and earnestly wishes it were otherwise. A workingman's *capacity* is measured by his *product*, whether he be hired or not hired; and to *all* of that product he holds the rights of property. Reason over it as you like, you can never take even a fragment of that property from him without defrauding him.

Q. Do you blame employers?

A. Certainly not. It is the system. Everybody is mixed up with it one way or other. But there can be nothing nobler than for an employer to search out the truth as to these great economic questions.

Q. What do you make of the "prescriptive rights" to land?

A. There you remove the question pretty much out of the domain of Political Economy. I find, in this case, prescriptive rights, so-called, in mortal conflict with economic rights. I find a few men saying they own one-half of Ireland, a few men saying they own one-half of all England, and a few whom you might almost count on your fingers claiming to own one-half of all Scotland. What can one say about it? If the very existence of the nation were not imperilled by the present state of things, the question might be more easily answered. The laws of Political Economy are inexorable laws. On the front of every one of them the finger of God may be said to have written, "Be sure your sins will find you out." The economic sins of England are finding her out with a vengeance, and I positively tremble when I think of the dreadful issues before us, and of the terrible forces of destruction which she has nursed at her own doors. It is to help to clear the way to the heart of this subject that I have written these papers, and with the conviction before me that no man should enter blindly into any conflict, and especially such a conflict as this. It is an indispensable preliminary to every movement to see that our cause is just; for, in the words of a great American statesman, "nothing is ever settled which is not right." This is not simply an Irish question; the canker is eating at the heart of England and Scotland as well. And this is what makes it appear to me so strange that well educated gentlemen in London should continually be breathing out fire and slaughter against their fellow-men when complaint is made of the never-ending oppression, or when some poor oppressed creature, wearied out by suffering, at last breaks through all restraint; and that the only word thrown from England across the channel in the teeth of Ireland is that hateful and atrocious one, *coercion*, *coercion*. Men who give way to such violence are certainly no friends of either England or Ireland. They are imperilling their country, and the best thing both for them and the country would be to place them where their ravings could do no harm. For everybody may see that they are playing with gunpowder over a loaded mine. They are blind to the perils around them on every hand. Do they think that English land tenure, or Scotch land tenure, or English and Scotch farming, or English workingmen, are all in such happy, peaceful, and prosperous conditions that they can venture to rage around like firebrands with nothing but

"coercion" upon their lips? Have they actually shut their eyes to the fact that the people of Great Britain and Ireland will never stand idly by to see their fellows beaten to the earth on a question which concerns the very life and existence of the empire? I express my honest conviction when I say that I see no other way out of the perils with which the nation is surrounded than the dividing of the national lands among the people to whom these lands of right belong. There is the cure. All other tinkering will be vain. Millions of toiling people have, in the short space of a few months, gone to the fountain head itself and learned that God created the lands of a nation for the people of a nation, and humanity will never go back on that idea. All the fires of persecution will but burn it the deeper into its heart. I have no doubt that the Government will endeavor, as it has often tried before, to sit on two stools, and it will inevitably fall between them.\*

May God in his mercy grant that the sword may not be called in to cut the Gordian knot, even though the sword was originally employed to tie that knot! As to prescriptive rights, the moralists can no doubt tell us, when they find their tongues (for the moralists seem to have a strange faculty of being most silent when they are most needed), whether five hundred or a thousand years of wrong doing give a prescriptive right to further or continued wrong doing. If it does, then let us deify WRONG, burn our bibles and churches, and end the matter. If the wrong were all done and finished, I would say—let the matter rest—let us have peace. But the wrong is being always done—the drainage of the resources of the cultivators of the soil never ceases a single moment, and just there lies the danger and the trouble. Some Archbishops and Bishops, and a multitude of patriotic priests, have nobly spoken their minds, and, wonderful to tell, their heads are still on their shoulders. A nation with one breath demands its rights. And it is plain to all who soberly reflect over it, that to send over battalions of men (men who ought to be workingmen and contributing to the happiness and peace of humanity) armed with weapons of slaughter in the attempt to suppress that national demand, is the most perilous and fatal policy which could be adopted. And on the one side—the side using, or about to use, these slaughter weapons—there has not, as all the world knows, been any attempt to meet the question on the broad basis of reason and human rights, if we except some watery stuff in certain of the English Reviews.

Q. Why is Ulster not stained to the same extent as Connaught or Munster with agrarian crimes?

A. Because Ulster has not been stained to the same extent with those crimes of eviction which have awakened such universal indignation and horror. Just give Ulster a few months' experience of eviction as it has been perpetrated in Connaught and Munster, and see what Ulster would produce. If Connaught is said to be related to a very hot place, I do not know where we would then find a place hot enough with which to compare Ulster.

Q. Does the Apostle Paul say anything about land laws?

A. "The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits."

Q. Does the Apostle mean that after he has eaten his portion, some one, a landlord for example, may come in and sweep all the rest away?

A. Don't let us convict Paul of such folly. He states a principle which commends itself to the common judgment of mankind—that the man of labor, the producer of all the good things of this life, must first enjoy the fruits of his toil, and then give to his brethren who may be in want or in need of these good things, or for any other good object that he may choose. It is as if Paul had said: It is in accordance with the natural feelings and promptings of the human heart, and is

\* "There is a fearful debt due to Ireland which has been accumulating for centuries, through absenteeism and landlords, whose interests have been in England, and not in Ireland. By the unalterable law of retribution it has all come on this generation; and the way to perpetuate it with ever-accumulating interest on the next generation is to pursue the same old, false, vicious system which has made Ireland what she is." Rev. F. W. Robertson, M.A. So wrote one of whom his biographer has well said, "To the tenderness of a true woman he joined the strong will and the undaunted courage of a true man." It is always the best men of England, those whose writings have left the deepest and healthiest impression on the age, who speak most truthfully of Ireland.

a claim recognized by God himself, the great proprietor of all, that the man who produces the fruits should first have all his wants satisfied, and then be at liberty to distribute where he thinks best. Paul places the worker, the producer, where he ought to be, in the front rank, at the head of all.

Q. O poor landlords ! I thought we might surely find in this text some little standing room for them. Can't we find standing room for them anywhere ?

A. Standing room ! One of the Old Testament prophets, Micah, does not give them so much as a rod of ground. "They shall sit every man under his vine and fig tree, and none shall make them afraid." See if you can pen a more thorough anti-landlord text than that. Every man his own proprietor. Each cultivating *his own*, for that is the meaning of the sentence. Any room here, even standing room, for what we understand by a modern landlord ? Where would his tenants come from ? Where would his poor homeless laborers be found ? Micah is describing in the context the glory of the latter days, days which, let us hope, are not very far off now, and, alas ! he sweeps landlords all away. *Every man an owner.* Every tiller an owner. Every owner a tiller. Just think of it, landlord press. Why, it is enough to break your hearts and turn your ink to gall.

Q. "None shall make them afraid." What does that mean ?

A. Aye, what does it mean ! Let the desolate hills of Ireland find a voice. Let those over whom the dread shadow of eviction constantly hangs tell what it means. Let the millions on this continent who have not forgotten the land from which they sprung give the reply. Let the ruined and blackened roof-trees that I have witnessed in the Highlands of Scotland speak if they can find a tongue. Yes, let the homeless of all nations stand forth now as witnesses. Truly, the system is on its trial. It is now dragged fairly, forth to the bar of public opinion. Let us hear *every word* it can advance in its favor before it is condemned. All the witness-boxes in Christendom will not hold a tithe of the witnesses who have their tale to tell,

Q. Does the wise Solomon say anything about it ?

A. "Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof."

Q. Alas ! poor landlords. Does Solomon not leave a single fig for these lords ? He mustn't have cared a fig for them.

A. That's so. The entire fruit of the fig tree shall be used, or owned, by the hand which has cared for it, and cultivated it. It's a broad text, and covers considerable ground. It will do for all toilers, yea, for all humanity, and for all time. *Ownership and tillage, as I have already insisted, hand in hand.* Prophets, Patriarchs, Apostles, God himself, all down upon Landlordism.

Q. Any more texts from St. Paul ?

A. Let us throw this one in, just as a sort of supplement : "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that *any* should not work, neither should he eat." There. Short logic that. 'Tis a keen knife. It cuts to the bone. It is utterly merciless. And he *commands*. He will not stay to reason about it. Away with you, he cries—every man to his work—if you do not *work* you shall not *eat*. And it is the voice of God. To *workingmen* this text cannot apply. They, at any rate, are outside the controversy. And all non-workers, and the captious men who will not hear the voice, must just themselves settle the matter with St. Paul.

Q. Is there any incident in Old Testament Scripture which affords a parallel to the present State trials at Dublin ?

A. Yes, a striking one. Let every one read it and ponder it. I quote from the fifth chapter of Nehemiah :

"And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren, the Jews. For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters are many ; therefore, we take up corn for them that we may eat and live. Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards and houses that we might buy corn, because of the dearth. There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards.

Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children, and lo ! we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought into bondage already ; neither is it in our power to redeem them, for other men have our lands and vineyards. And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words. Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them : Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. And I said unto them : We after our ability have redeemed our brethren, the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen, and will ye even sell your brethren ? or shall they be sold unto us ? Then held they their peace and found nothing to answer. Also I said : It is not good that ye do ; ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies ? I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn : I pray you let us leave off this usury. RESTORE, I PRAY YOU, TO THEM, EVEN THIS DAY, THEIR LANDS, THEIR VINEYARDS, THEIR OLIVEYARDS, AND THEIR HOUSES, ALSO THE HUNDREDTH PART OF THE MONEY, AND OF THE CORN, THE WINE, AND THE OIL, THAT YE EXACT OF THEM. THEN SAID THEY, WE WILL RESTORE THEM, AND WILL REQUIRE NOTHING OF THEM ; SO WILL WE DO AS THOU SAYEST. Then I called the priests and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise. Also I shook my lap, and said : So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labor, that performeth not this promise, even thus he be shaken out and emptied. And all the congregation said Amen, and praised the Lord. And the people did according to this promise."

Why, one would think the whole narrative has been written for the "Four Courts" at Dublin at this moment.

Q. What would have been done with Nehemiah had he lived in these days ?

A. He would have stood in the dock of the Dublin Four Courts.

Q. O, horrible thought ! The church would have aroused the world before that was done.

A. Not so fast. Sealed lips can often do more harm than outspoken tongues.

Q. What are the great economic and other subjects embraced in this narrative of Nehemiah ?

A. Bondage ; Usury ; Taxation ; Mortgaged lands and property ; Famine ; Evictions ; Rents ; Borrowing to pay taxes ; Human brotherhood ; Servitude of the sons and daughters of freemen ; Helpless poverty ; Monopoly of Land ; Covetousness ; the faithful rebukes of a great Patriot ; Redemption of brethren sold into slavery ; The selling of their own brethren into slavery ; Heathen reproach ; Silence, self-condemnation, and repentance ; RESTORATION OF LANDS, HOUSES, ETC., AND OF MONEY AND GOODS ; No compensation asked or offered ; The Oath of the Priests ; Nehemiah's threatenings against Monopolizers—the shaking of every man out of his house and labor who persisted in destroying his nation and encroaching on the rights of his fellow-men.

Q. But the poor nobles and rulers had no landlord press to back them up in those days ?

A. True. If they had had such a press, perhaps they would not have hung their heads so low. Depend upon it, they would have had something to say.

Q. What should we do with Nehemiah's narrative to-day ?

A. I ask every Priest and Minister simply to read it to his people from his pulpit or desk, and without a single word or comment except this : " Let us see if we can trace any connection between this narrative and what is now going on in Ireland." Then leave it to the people's own thoughts.

Montreal, 12th January, 1881.

## No. 7.

## RENT DECLARED BY NATURE AN UNLAWFUL OPPRESSION OF INDUSTRY.—THE INHERENT POWERS OF THE SOIL ARE PRICELESS, AND THERE CAN BE NO ARTIFICIAL TAX UPON THEM IN JUSTICE.

Q. Does the appropriation of land, or the entering upon possession of land, create an economic quantity, or give rise to an economic fund, known as the Rent of Land?

A. It does not.

Q. Do not the Economists maintain that the rent of land is a natural consequence of the appropriation of land, not of over appropriation but simply of appropriation as such.

A. Many of them do. Ricardo, in one place, puts it in that light. It is simply a baseless assumption. How can rent spring out of one's taking possession of his portion of land, or of working his portion of land? People enter upon possession of land, with the view of working the land, with the view of bringing forth its produce. You can bring forth a product out of the soil as a return for your labor, not another thing called rent, not a myth known by that name.

Q. Do you call rent a myth? Methinks it is something very tangible, and to most persons very crushing. Is it not a common cry that everybody could live well were it not for the rents?

A. Economically speaking, it is a pure myth—that is to say, human labor cannot produce it and prosper. Rent is never created—you never saw it spring out of labor or out of land. Industry never once paid it as a genuine product of industry. It has always paid it as an unlawful reduction of the fruits of industry, and therefore always as an oppression of industry. There will always be a struggle to pay rent, because it is an unnatural and unlawful tax on industry, and hence the cry to which you refer.

Q. Unlawful as to the statute-books?

A. O no; unlawful as to the grand and never-to-be-repealed laws of political economy. People may write anything they please in statute-books, but you can never manipulate the laws of political economy. It is not statute-books which are to save the world. The race is to be saved and preserved by the full national recognition of these laws of political economy, laws as old as truth itself, or at least as old as the race. How truly dignified and inspiring, then, are the themes we are discussing. May we not say, without the least disparagement to the other sciences, that it is the practical and world-wide importance of this subject which gives to it the precedence over every other branch of human investigation? If we are so utterly dependent on these economic laws, how absolutely necessary that these laws should be understood.

Q. Then do you hold that there is no law of rent at all?

A. I do, most distinctly. There is no more economic law of rent of land than there is of law regulating the lives of fairies or Will-o'-the-Wisps.

Q. Let us take Ricardo's definition;—Rent is that portion of the products of the earth which is paid to the landlord for the use of the original and indestructible power of the soil." Does it not sound well and wear a scientific air?

A. Ricardo and much that he wrote are worthy of all respect—this particular proposition is worthy of no respect. Two economic truths place their cold iron fingers upon it, and the myth is fled.

1. The original and indestructible powers of the soil can never be sold by man. He can only sell his labor as embodied in the products of that labor. The original powers of the soil, its properties and qualities, are not his to sell. They have

never once been sold by a human being, and never will be to the end of time. Landlords do not give the use of the original and indestructible powers of the soil; the use of these (if you can really talk of the use) is a free gift of God to the tiller of the soil.

2. The use of a thing cannot be sold, for use is gratuitous, and much less can the use of the original, the God-created powers of the soil, be sold. These properties and qualities are as free and gratuitous to the man who works the soil for his living as the air is to the man who breathes it, or as is the sunshine to the man who looks towards the blue vault of heaven. If a man can claim to be paid for the use of the original and indestructible powers of the soil, may he not just as reasonably put in a claim for the use of the original and indestructible powers of the sun? There is no difference. Sun and rain and air and seasons have all worked in concert with the soil to bring forth the food. Why not claim for these as well? If the original and indestructible powers of the soil have been created for landlords, then it is for landlords alone that the earth turns on its axis revolves around the sun. If the land, the glorious rich broad acres, have been created for landlords, then God has designed that the stalwart tillers shall be forever serfs, and that the only destiny of man is hopeless slavery. That is the conclusion to which we are inevitably driven by the definition of Ricardo.

Q. The Creator has evidently had a purpose in view in endowing the land with these original powers—has it been to benefit tillers of the land who, by their toil, produce food for man and beast? Or has it been for the benefit of men who call themselves *lords of the land*, who do no work, who produce nothing, but who claim to own the land as land, irrespective of all improvements on that land?

A. For the former beyond all question.

Q. Then, does it not sound something like blasphemy itself for men to claim for the use of the free gifts of the original powers of the soil?

A. It looks as if the landlords were a sort of deity. It is nothing short of blasphemy.

Q. If landlords claim for these original and indestructible powers, how in the world are we ever to buy landlords out?

A. If their claims be true, you can never buy them out. The original powers of the soil are *for ever*, for all time. How could you price them? How could you sell them? How could you begin to estimate their value? The whole thing is absurd. Just imagine the English Privy Council sitting down to estimate the value of the original and indestructible powers of the soil! Think of all the Economists called in to help. What a Babel! Think of the Prime Minister opening the meeting something in this way: "My Lords and learned Professors, Her Majesty's Government is going to try the experiment of buying out all the landlords in Tipperary, at what amount do you estimate the value of the original and indestructible powers of the soil of that County?" Just think of the grave looks and long faces around the Council board as such a question came before them for solution. I think they would all ask time to dream over it.

Q. Let us look again at this matter. Can we not give a sum amounting to say 30 years' rental, and thus buy them out?

A. You never can, if all that is said about rent be true. For the original and indestructible powers of the soil do not depart with the lapse of 30 years—they are to the end of time—each year's product, so to speak, for each year's power. So far as Political Economy is concerned, you might just as well talk of buying out the Atlantic Ocean or the moon.

Q. Why do the Economists put rent on this ground? Why do they not simply say, for the use of the property?

A. The Economists would corner themselves if they did that. They know full well that the improvements all come out of the toil of the farm workers, so they go further back. They know instinctively that the rent is a portion of the produce of the tillers, so they must go further afield for something to justify rent. Take away all improvements on the soil, and what is there left for the Econo-

—nists to fight over but the original and indestructible powers of the soil? You see, then, how precarious are the claims advanced on behalf of landlords. Bring them to the inexorable test of political economy, and you give them as little ground to stand on as had the foot of Noah's dove.

Q. Is the man who makes shoes interested in this land and rent question as well as the tiller?

A. Yes.

Q. Or the carpenter, or baker, or mason, or any other artisan or tradesman?

A. Yes, all toilers are interested.

Q. Why are they all interested?

A. Because every department of legitimate and healthful trade and handicraft would be greatly fostered and strengthened by being brought in contact with millions of tillers owning full instead of empty pockets. In the case of Ireland, the spending of fifty to seventy millions of dollars additional every year by the tillers themselves would compel all sorts of home manufactures to be established. At present this vast sum is swept out of their pockets and spent mostly abroad in ministering to luxurious and diseased taste and dissipation in foreign cities. I tell you it would not be long before the harbors and bays of Ireland swarmed with shipping and the hum of industry heard over all the land. The joy of the land would return as if by magic; those hideous scenes which would be a reproach to the worst government on earth would all disappear; and a strong, a happy, and a contented people would add to the strength and integrity of the empire. The landlords themselves would, in turning tillers, add to and share in the general prosperity, and would soon know to value a peace and security which, under the present system, they need never hope to acquire, and would also learn to see how worthless is that high-strung and unnatural style of life which removes them out of the general sphere of their fellow-men, and whose silly and tyrannical exactions must inspire every noble and sensitive mind amongst them with mingled loathing and scorn.

Q. Will you please state the views of some of the other economists as to rent?

A. Thomas De Quincey, in his "Logic of Political Economy" (a work with more show of logic in it than real political economy), does not fully accept of Ricardo's explanation of rent. He tries to temper it with something that he conceives as springing up in favor of the landlord out of what he calls the *differential* powers of soils, and which he calls rent. Here is his definition: "Rent is that portion of the produce from the soil which is paid to the landlord for the use of its differential powers, as measured by comparison with those of similar agencies operating on the same market." And he confidently adds: "Though Aristotle should rise from the dead, that definition (I humbly submit) will stand." He has another formula, expressing, however, the same view: "Rent is the series of increments arising upon the differential qualities of land."

Q. Does it require the genius of an Aristotle to grapple with this notion of De Quincey?

A. No need to disturb his bones. Aristotle, if he faced such a problem, would at once shrink back into his grave and leave its solution to far humbler minds.

Q. Ought they not to be happy fellows, these landlords, to have all these successive "increments," these products of the differential powers of all soils, thus falling, by some occult economic law, into their pockets?

A. I should rather say so. Just think of the monstrous claims. Take four sorts of soils. The produce of soil No. 2 exceeds by a certain quantity the produce of soil No. 1—all that excess is rent for my lord's pocket. The produce of soil No. 3 exceeds by a certain quantity the produce of soil No. 2—that excess is also rent for my lord's pocket. The produce of soil No. 4 exceeds by a certain quantity the produce of soil No. 3—that is also rent for my lord's pocket. And so on *ad infinitum*. All the excess, therefore, between Nos. 1 and 4 is rent for their lordships, successive "increments" for these distinguished people. The various qualities of soils in England, De Quincey says, may be more than 300—

all the successive "increments" (a favorite word with these rent-mongers) of each successive number fall as if by some sort of magic into the pockets of men who never worked a hand's turn in their life, who never put a cent of their own earning into the soil, who never spaded a yard of ground, nor turned a furrow, nor reaped a sheaf.

Q. And is that really the sort of stuff before which De Quincey declared that even a resurrected Aristotle would fall prostrate?

A. It is.

Q. But would any writer now venture to advance such transparent nonsense?

A. You have no idea what modern English writers on political economy will "advance." Shade of Aristotle! Let me quote from an article in the last November number of the *Contemporary Review*, by Professor W. T. Aldis, on "The Prospects of Landowners":—

"Agricultural rent arises from the fact that the land which is at any time required for producing food is not all of the same degree of fertility. The rent of any particular piece of land is measured by the excess of the value of its produce over that of the produce of an equal area of land of the lowest fertility which has to be cultivated to supply the wants of the community."

Q. Monstrous! Can it be possible that such is deliberately set forth in the *Contemporary Review*? Is not the doctrine this: The poor wretched tiller may get what he can out of the barest and most barren and blasted heath, but all above that, all the surplus above the barren soil, is rent for the rich and idle members of society, and must go into my lord's pocket? And is it not this also: If some despairing wretch, No. 2, managed to scrape a living out of some yet more barren patch, then the difference, the "increment," between Nos. 1 and 2, would also flow into my lord's pocket?

A. You state correctly what modern English journalism sets before English readers on this great question. Do you wonder at the indignation now so often expressed on the public platform? This is what they are going to uphold with bullet and bayonet. Can you wonder that Ireland is in a ferment about it? Such a doctrine is confiscation with a vengeance. Nothing from any writer has ever fallen before my eye more impotent or more unjust as an excuse for barefaced robbery. There are diversities of qualities in land, says Professor Aldis, and on that ground rent arises! And so one human being called a landlord claims the entire produce of the toil of other human beings above all that will just keep them in life. One might as well carry you off body and soul into perpetual slavery on the ground that there are diversities in mental constitution. The raw material of the land, says the landlord, is of different strength and capacity, according to locality, therefore I must have all the tiller's produce above what the most barren land yields. May not the Professor just as well reason: The minds of men are of different strength and capacity, therefore I appropriate to my service everybody above the level of an ordinary lunatic, say No. 1. And if some poor wretch, No. 2, be found still more fatuous than No. 1, then I seize on No. 1 too, and set him to do my work. It is the same reasoning. Professor Aldis says these rents have a sort of fluctuating character, because rent does not depend on the intrinsic fertility of this or that morsel, or on what might be regarded as a "sensibly stable quantity," and on the fertility of the land. He says it therefore gets a sort of sliding character. And Mr. Aldis evidently sets this forth as an original discovery in political economy. It is a sliding scale which has always a marvelous tendency to ruin and bankrupt the tillers.

He explains the theory and the meaning of the terms employed by the following illustration. Now I want your attention particularly to this matter, just to let us see what sort of creature may be made to claim parentage with an illustration:—

"A number of settlers, says the Professor, go on new land. One man hits on the good spot and makes quite rich. A second hits on a poorer piece and makes just a living. A third happens on the barren land, fails in all his exertions, and at last leaves it untilled and deserted. Up to this stage, the Professor says, nothing like rent has arisen. Never mind, it will make its appearance in due time. He

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now assumes that the State is the landlord, that the tillers have no *rights* in the land, that the State has the right to step in and say, All this belongs to me. Here, says Professor Aldis, is how rent "arises." The State says to the tiller of the good soil, All that you produce over and above the poor wretch who had to desert his home ; all that you make above the average earnings of the tillers on these poorest soils is mine—into the State Treasury it must all flow—not a word of complaint—it is all ours—and we confiscate it whether you will or no. Haven't we the taxing power ? And now, says the worthy Professor, this is how rent "arises."

I hope you see it. I hope you see, with perfect clearness, how easy the step is from the landlord to the State, and from the State to the landlord. Beautiful, isn't it ? This is English logic, and this is English Political Economy. And this is the sort of reading which is laid on the tables of the wealthy classes to afford mental recreation and instruction, and to furnish the empty mind with excuses for the use of bayonets and buckshot, and for trampling the rights of nations under foot !

"The amount thus exacted is called the rent of the farm," adds the Professor. No doubt, no doubt. You may give it any sort of name. A fine *exaction*. And all done by the law-books and in obedience to "the law." So far as the poor tillers are concerned, I am sure it is simply this, "Your money or your life."

Q. Let us look a little further into De Quincey. What more does he say about rent ?

A. We will reserve it till our next meeting. I think I have given you enough wherewith to chew the cud of reflection for one week. I will show you more marvels before I am done. I have stated enough to arouse every slumbering faculty within you. The wonder is, not that Ireland is thoroughly aroused, but that England and Scotland can slumber on in presence of such monstrous and perilous claims. This is the sort of teaching with which the Economists are deceiving the people and corrupting the national life.

Montreal, 27th January, 1881.

## No. 8.

HOW LABOR IS SQUEEZED BETWEEN THE LAND AND THE LAND-LORD.—WHERE THE RENT COMES FROM.—HOW BEAUTIFULLY IT GROWS FROM THE SOIL, AND ALL BY ITSELF, YOU KNOW.—CANADA'S MEDITATED CRIME.—GIGANTIC DEEDING AWAY OF THE BIRTHRIGHT OF UNBORN GENERATIONS.

QUESTION. Before we again take up De Quincey, let me ask if the Government of your own Dominion has not been going into the landlord business on an extensive scale?

ANSWER. The Government of Canada is at this moment trying to get the representatives of the people at Ottawa to consent to the creation of one landlord with 25 millions of acres, an area larger than all Ireland. There are men going about the country advocating the commission of this GREAT CRIME, which, so far as it places a territory fit for a considerable kingdom absolutely in the hands of one landlord, is equivalent to the disinheriting and bringing into bondage of a vast population; for these 25 millions of acres are capable of supporting from 8 to 12 millions of people. And our Government is teaching us a new style altogether of doing business. They are showing us how to pay for building a railroad, and leaving the railroad after it is paid for in the hands of this landlord corporation as its absolute owner. Think of the best lands in the fertile belt, and the great public highways, in the hands of one landlord, and God's wild lands loaded with mortgage before ever a settler has felled a tree or broken a furrow. What a stupendous wrong!

Q. Is not this treason to the State?

A. It is not only treason, and high treason, but the highest treason.

Q. What are we to think of a people where such a thing would even dare to be proposed?

A. Alas! alas! The weal and welfare of unborn millions concerns but a few. Make money—that is the creed. Plenty discussion about this railway contract from a mercantile point of view—the stupendous crime of giving away the lands of the people is barely referred to. I have read leader after leader in our newspapers, and in many of them not so much as a hint even of the giving away of the lands.

Q. Please let us now again take up De Quincey. What more does he say about rent?

A. In case any one should mistake his meaning, he gives several diagrams of this wonderful rent procession, these successive rent "increments." As I think every land tiller and farmer should know and understand how the modern school of Political Economy plays into the hands of the non-producers, I here reproduce one of these diagrams, to which I have added the words *Land* and *Rent*, to make the matter more obvious to the eye:—

No. 1	Land.	Rent.
No. 2	Land.	Rent.
No. 3	Land.	Rent.
No. 4	Land.	Rent.

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Q. Why, you are filling me with profoundest interest and astonishment. I am perfectly in love with these grand "increments." I think I will go in for an Irish estate after all. Pray, do these great square corners grow out every year?

A. Yes, once every year. Draw a line down the middle of each square, and you will have two "gales" of rent; or, as in Scotland, the "Whitsunday" and "Martinmas" rent.

Q. Grand gales indeed. I hope they may blow my way. Are they not splendid fellows, those economists, who can carve for people in this style?

A. Doubtless, doubtless.

Q. And may I go on building up these pyramids of rent squares till there are 300 of them or more?

A. O yes, so says De Quincey.

Q. Then these rent "secretions" come like the dew on the fleece of Gideon, do they not?

A. It seems so. Secretions! Toilers and tillers, take note of the word.

Q. And does he say *how* these fine squares become rent—by what particular process they fall into the pockets of those who, perhaps, do not even see the broad acres from which they spring?

A. Nay, not a word of it. He simply pronounces his *ipse dixit*, and calls it Rent. Here are his own words: "These sections on each of the upper soils (Nos. 1, 2, &c.,)—this absciss marked off by dotted lines—is rent."

Q. Absciss! What's that?

A. O, a sort of economic swelling to bulge out your pockets.

Q. I go in for the dotted lines—let's have the dots—don't you?

A. The pyramid gets smaller as you descend. I suppose you have noticed that. It is not like the Pyramids of Egypt, made to stand. You observe the pyramid gets ominously small at the base.

Q. Aye, I do. How is that? Does it presage a fall?

A. No. 1, the largest, is at the top, and No. 4, the shortest, at the bottom. De Quincey says No. 1 represents the best lands all grabbed first by the land monopolists. Then comes No. 2, not so good—then No. 3, quality still decreasing; and No. 4, worst of all. Land tillers, he says, move about in this manner. This, he says, is the order of precession on the part of all farmers and appropriators of land at every period of history and with regard to all lands. The Economists hold that this is the order or manner in which new countries are colonized or new lands taken up, and they dwell particularly on the point as one of great importance in the establishment of their rent theory.

Q. Do you believe it?

A. I believe it is all stuff.

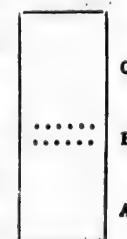
Q. I suppose the tillers are somewhere in the diagram. I see only land and rent. What has De Quincey made of them?

A. He does not say. But I have prepared a diagram to show exactly the whereabouts of the poor tillers. To leave them out, you know would be to play Hamlet and leave Hamlet out. A is the Land. B is the Tiller. C is the Rent.

Q. Alas, poor tiller! He gets a squeeze there between Rent and Land. But why make him so lean and thin, with so much fat above and below?

A. I dare not do otherwise. Anderson, De Quincey, Mill, Fawcett, Aldis, and all the Economists, would be down upon me. Do they not say that rent is *all* that is produced over and above the very poorest soils in cultivation? If anything, I have given too much space to B. The thinnest line imaginable would better show forth the situation. I am studiously following the Economists.

Q. The whole affair looks like "cornering" the poor tillers. Suppose he goes on with his diagram down to No. 18 or No. 20, wouldn't he have the tillers rarely cornered, in fact thoroughly "boycotted?"



A. I think he would.

Q. Would the big rent squares decrease or get cornered? Surely the absciss or secretion would at last evaporate.

A. Fye; I think you have been attending Land League meetings. You are cornering me. I hardly know what to say. Well, to tell the truth, the rent corners would all be there.

Q. What! once a year, same size, same increments, all the way down the scale?

A. Yes, up to No. 20, or up to No. 300, if your upper number is long enough, or the last poor wretch can but scrape a living.

Q. And what would become of the tillers who do all the work? Where would you have them when down at No. 20 or No. 300?

A. I suppose the poor, patient, rack-rented cultivators would then be evicted and cast out with their families to perish on the roadside. For this benign and beautiful system rides rough-shod over its own logic, seeing it evicts men without mercy from the wretched patch of reclaimed bog, and whose pale features and tattered garments but too plainly tell that they have made neither rent nor living. So if a poor tiller is forced down to No. 300, even No. 300 is not spared if the impossible rent is not forthcoming.

Q. I do declare that were I a landlord I would be quite in love with these beautiful "series of increments" (I wouldn't quarrel with the word) arising upon the "differential qualities of land." I would become quite a scientist, and would strive to talk learnedly. What fine fellows Ricardo and De Quincey must have been. Didn't one of them use opium?

A. Something of that sort, I believe. But you are travelling away from our subject.

Q. I don't know if I am. I wish to be logical, like Mr. De Quincey. Does he say we can have all these superb squares of rent without a bit of toil, without a stroke of work?

A. No doubt on that point.

Q. That they grow "natural," so to speak, like the limpets on the rocks?

A. I suppose so.

Q. And all this boundless revenue to the lords of the land on the ground that God has made soils of *differential powers*?

A. No doubt of it. He tells us so. You have no idea how learnedly and complacently the Professors can write about it. We have not time to quote them all.

Q. I declare new lights are dawning on me so fast that I can hardly keep my senses about me. Would it not be my duty, were I a landlord, when I pass a piece of deep, fertile loam, to say, God be thanked for the loam—and when I pass a piece of heavy clay, to say, God be thanked for the clay—and when I pass a piece of sharp sand, to say, God be thanked for the sand—and when I pass a bog, to say, God be thanked for the bog—and when I pass a piece of bare rock, to say, God be thanked for the bare rock?

A. Certainly—and you might in addition call down a blessing on the dear economists who have made your claims to rent so clear and logical. Only, observe, you might happen to ask a blessing where it would be quite natural for the tiller to launch his curse.

Q. But I want to find the whereabouts of the poor fellow who has got down so low that there is no rent, and therefore no fear of eviction—can you tell me where to find him?

A. Ah! friend, that is a *lost quantity* you are in search of, at least in Ireland.

Q. Well, when evicted, has he a right to the Queen's highway?

A. I declare you puzzle me. I suppose he and his poor traps must not encumber the road.

Q. Has he a right to a grave?

A. A man who has no right to a home has no right to a grave.

Q. Suppose there had been no *differential* qualities—that the Creator had been so indifferent to the comfort of landlords as to have made it all of a heap, you know—what then? Would it not have been very bad for the landlords?

A. The economists who can invent such a piece of absurdity regarding rent, would have soon found a way satisfactory to themselves out of the difficulties you suggest.

Q. Then do these writers just plainly tell us that *because* there are varieties of soil, rent is?

A. Yes.

Q. Why, God did no more, did he, when he said, *Let there be light*, and there was light?

A. Perhaps not.

Q. Is there any logic here?

A. I see none.

Q. Is there any political economy here?

A. I see none.

Q. Is there any common sense here?

A. I see none.

Q. Would it just be as sensible to say that because there are clouds in the sky, rent is?

A. Just as sensible. Polonius, you know, found a whale in a cloud; and Mr. Bagehot and Prof. Jevons have discovered commercial panics in sun spots.

Q. And have Messrs. De Quincey, Ricardo, and others of their followers, spent all this literary toil just to proclaim to the world such a mass of economic rubbish and falsehood?

A. They have. Such, of course, was not their intention, but that is the result. You must not think that I in the least undervalue many grand and good things written by Ricardo and the economists.

Q. With such apologies for rent as these, was it not high time that Ireland, the grandest and most patient sufferer of all, should fling her broad banner to the breeze and proclaim to all the world that this thing must end?

A. High time, high time. God grant her a great and splendid victory. The land for the people, and rents and landlordism utterly abolished, is the goal she is destined to win. This afflicted island, depend upon it, will ere long rise from its ashes. Great thoughts can never die. They are eternal. An antagonistic press, a scornful aristocracy, serried ranks armed to the teeth—all will at last go down before those great, glorious, and living ideas, in presence of which all mere physical force is as brutish as it is vain. And it will not be long ere the voice of Scotland is heard, and the voice of England too. To slumber now is an impossibility.

The land for the people; tillage and ownership hand in hand; a farm for every tiller; and the full and unbroken fruits of toil for every toiler. These are the ideas that have humanity at their back; and rest assured they have come to stay.

Montreal, 25th January, 1881.

## No. 9.

CLAIMING THE INHERENT QUALITIES OF THE SOIL AS RENT.—  
 THE LANDLORD-SUPPORTERS' PHILOSOPHY.—NATURE'S  
 BOUNTIES ALL FOR THE LANDLORDS.—AND THE COMMON  
 WORM IS BUT ENTITLED TO A BARE LIVING.

QUESTION.—Did David Ricardo originate this theory of rent?

ANSWER.—No; he re-stated it. It was originally advanced by Dr. James Anderson, who was born near Edinburgh in 1739. He was a voluminous writer on agricultural topics, and won some celebrity in his day. He conducted a weekly periodical publication called *The Bee*. He states his theory in this way: Rent depends on the various degrees of fertility of soil, and on the circumstance of its being impossible to apply capital indefinitely to any quality of land without receiving from it a diminished return. Labor, you observe, slips out of sight, and the idea of returns for capital, for the *tools* and *appliances* of labor itself, slips in. The theory fell into oblivion for about thirty-five years, when it was re-stated and enlarged upon by Mr. Ricardo. J. S. Mill, the contemporary and intimate friend of Ricardo, adopted the same views, as did also Mr. Malthus. All the economists have, so far as I know, "followed their leader," as the saying is. I do not think that any writer has made a thorough exposure of the economic fraud from the standpoint of political economy itself.

Q. What is the true meaning of Dr. Anderson's ideas of applying capital to land?

A. You can only apply labor to land; and therefore it must mean that you cannot work the poorer soils without receiving a gradually diminishing return for your labor, and so far quite true.

Q. And why should rent arise out of such a circumstance?

A. That is just the difficulty. Rent is a portion of the fruits of the tiller's labor taken from him and handed over to one who does no work. Is it not a monstrous doctrine that tillage should be subjected to this species of confiscation on the ground of the poorer soils not being able to furnish such ample returns to the tillers as do the richer soils? Do you not perceive that it makes landlordism in effect say: God made fertile soils, everything above bare rocks and stones, for us, the landlords?

Q. Don't you think the poor tillers in such a case should be rather helped than crushed down beneath this load of rent?

A. One would think so.

Q. It does not appear to me, then, as if it were a question of good landlords or bad landlords. Am I correct in that supposition? Is it something far deeper?

A. If your ship be scuttled, it matters little to you whether it were done by a sinner or a saint. If by a saint, you will not get any more insurance than what is agreed by the underwriters. If by a sinner, your insurance claim will not be docked on that ground.

Q. Have the economists been faithful to industry in advancing such rent theories?

A. Far from it. The very reverse. Rent is said to be that portion of the produce of the earth, or of labor rather, which is paid by the tiller to the non-tiller for the use of the natural and inherent powers of the soil. The economists generally have broken up into two portions the money paid by the tiller under the name of rent—part of it rent simply as rent for those original powers of nature; and a part of it as a yearly return for the *use* of the buildings and improvements; all made by the hands of the tillers themselves, or out of the fruits of the toil of the

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tillers, but which the economists designate as *returns for the use of capital*. It is clear that nobody will pay rent for land if there is plenty of equal quality in the neighborhood to be had simply for cultivation. But when monopoly of land begins, rent begins, and the boldest and most determined attempts are made by these scourges of humanity to get possession even of this new Continent with its hundreds of millions of fertile acres. Reduced to its ultimate issues it is an endeavor to enslave humanity. And the economists try to cloak the wickedness by endeavoring to get people to believe that *rents tend to increase as cultivators are driven down to poorer and poorer soils*. You may find it all stated and set forth as most religious truth, even in that standard publication, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

And the economists, with most marvelous inconsistency, or perhaps in their case with consistent *inconsistency*, will labor to defend all this dreadful work whilst quoting to your face the sentiment, *Qui laboribus omnia vendunt*.

Q. What does Professor Fawcett mean when he asks (Manual of Political Economy), "Can we obtain an index to the amount of rent which land can afford at any particular time?"

A. I cannot tell. Land pays nothing. Land can never "afford" to pay anything. You might as well ask the moon to pay you something. It is human labor which pays, not land.

Q. Does Professor Fawcett, in his writings, state anything new or more intelligible as to rent?

A. No. He simply follows Ricardo and others. He says in substance (Manual, chap. iii, "rents as determined by competition") that there are diversities of soils, some more productive, some less productive, therefore rent exists. In fact, it is quite noteworthy to observe how, when an economic heresy is once fairly started, a host of subsequent writers will join in the hue-and-cry, seemingly without knowing or caring whither it leads. It shows how much has yet to be learned as to some at least of the grand and leading principles of political economy.

Professor Fawcett expounds Ricardo's rent theory afresh. Here is the kernel of it: "The rent of any particular land may be estimated as the difference between the amount which it produces and the amount of produce raised from the worst land in cultivation." Again: "We have supposed that the net produce of A's farm exceeds by £1,000 the net produce of B's farm, A would be able to pay this £1,000 as rent, and therefore the rent of any land is the difference between its net produce and the net produce of land which pays a merely nominal rent." That is to say, the £1,000 from the fat farm is for the landlord—the handful from the lean B farm is all that is destined for the actual producer. The entire heresy, you see, is swallowed without the least compunction.

Q. It seems to me that that is a strange definition, and that heresy is stamped upon every word of it. Does not the Professor mean to say that there is no rent attached to the very worst land in cultivation, say to almost barren sand?

A. Perhaps you forget that barren sand, as you call it, may, by proper management, sometimes be made amongst the richest lands in cultivation. But let that pass. He says plainly that no rent can be got from the bad land; that there is, to begin with, land so barren that it will only pay "a nominal rent"; in other words, nothing at all to the landlord. I dare say you have never yet seen these happy cultivators on the bad land sitting rent free. The phenomenon has yet to come. But let that also pass.

Q. Still it is land "in cultivation", is it not, poor though it be?

A. Yes; and the tiller, I suppose, must have all the produce, as it will be only sufficient to keep him and his family *in bare life*.

Q. Then, does he not say that *all the increase* between that low, perishing point, up to the grand fifty and hundred fold of the rich, deep and generous loams, is rent, and goes into the pockets of the landlords

A. He does.

Q. And is not this tantamount to saying that the tillers, the farmers, are doomed by this so-called law of rent to remain forever in wretchedness and poverty—that, in fact, it is no advantage to them to go upon a better soil or a better farm?

A. Unquestionably that is what is held if rent be, as they say, the difference in every case between the poorest land in cultivation and the richest.

Q. Is it not an impeachment of Nature?

A. It is.

Q. Is it not an impeachment of the Creator, of the kind, and merciful, loving Father of all?

A. It is.

Q. Does it not compel me, the tiller, to reason in this way: If nature has decreed that I am only entitled to what keeps myself and family in a miserable state of existence from the proceeds of my toil on the very poorest soils, why should I desire to go upon better soils, or to do anything at all to improve my condition?

A. It does. An entire nation is at this moment a standing evidence of the truth of what you say. And this is the English system of rent!

Q. Is it not equal to saying that the beneficent Creator who has scattered his bounties in such profusion on every hand; who has filled, as was said by Hobbes over two hundred years ago, "the two breasts of our common mother, land and sea," with such boundless nutriment for the human race; that the hand which has done all this has had no other design than to make of the great bulk of his intelligent creatures a race of vagabonds and beggars, doomed to perpetual misery, to perpetual slavery, to perpetual degradation? Could you more thoroughly school a nation in infidelity? Could you teach people anything more dastardly than this? In a word, is it not a straight road to national ruin?

A. It is all that you say, and much more than you say; for no language that you can use can adequately set forth the condition to which humanity may be reduced under the sway of such terrible doctrines. It substitutes, in many cases, a reign of terror for a reign of peace, plenty, and contentment. Were the same conditions existing in England and Scotland as in Ireland, the people would be in the same state as in Ireland. But these conditions are altered, to some extent, by the presence of great manufacturing industries; and into the factories of England and Scotland the youth of these countries are largely drawn, relieving in a measure the pressure on the land. But let me remind you that life in England is perishing on the factory door-step, just as surely as the life of Ireland is perishing on the broad acres from which are drained across the channel millions upon millions of pounds weight of the best food every week throughout the year. Is not the public mind in America becoming keenly alive to the fact that the domestic life of one of the great New England States is perishing on the door-steps of her mills and factories?

Q. Under the reign of such economic doctrines, it would be useless, would it not, to tell the people of the wonderful fertility of the deep soils of Manitoba and the Northwest?

A. It would be telling them, and deceiving them, about good things they would never enjoy. For if all the fat of the land is destined for the landlords, why should cultivators trouble themselves about searching out rich and productive soils? The government of Canada has already handed over many millions of acres of the best wild lands to one railroad corporation; and these wild lands may already be accepted as loaded with the inevitable mortgage, or made security for payment of bonds, facts of which intending emigrants would be well to beware.

Q. On what ground, according to this English system, is the tiller entitled to any produce at all? Can you show me, on this principle, why he should get even any produce from the most barren land he tills?

A. I cannot. The inherent and indestructible powers of the soil exist even in barren lands just the same as in rich lands.

ers, are less and less and soil or a difference in , loving nature family poorest at all to e of the ered his Hobbes and and which has s intellig- isery, to school man this? age that may be y cases, the same could be extent, ories of living in England s perish- ns upon ear. Is domes- steps of d it not, and the y would y should ? The the best accept- f bonds, titled to et even even in

Q. Are we not hedged up by this English system to this—that the actual tillers in England, Scotland, and Ireland, receive just enough to keep life in themselves and families, the same as you would throw a bone to a dog?

A. That is the outcome of the system. And Christian men are threatening to "coerce" the human race into submission to such doctrines, until they find time to give or not give, as they see fit, a little tinkering to the system, so as to make it a little more durable to the race. And the people of England, Scotland, and Ireland, are expected to rest patiently and utter no complaint under such a stupendous fraud.

Q. May it not be said that families who own their farms put a small part of the produce of their toil, say one-tenth, into one pocket, and another portion, say nine-tenths into the other pocket, and call the one the tiller's pocket and the other the landlord pocket?

A. I think they would lose their balance under such a state of things. Your question shows the utter absurdity of such doctrines.

Q. Let us consider again about paying so many years' purchase, as it is called, for lands. Can we not give a sum equivalent say to twenty or thirty years of rental, and buy out the landlords?

A. You never can, if all that is said about rent be true. For the original and indestructible powers of the soil do not depart with the lapse of twenty or thirty years. They are to the end of time, each year's product for each year's power. You could not buy out these powers by paying a thousand years' rental, for it is the *power* you are trying to buy out, not the landlord, the mere man. You may as well speak of buying out the powers of the rain, the wind, the lightning, or the sunshine. While grass grows and water runs these powers will remain. And if you attempt to buy them out by thirty years' purchase, or by five hundred years' purchase, *it is confiscation*. And it is beyond all question that if God has created these powers for the landlords, it is an utter impossibility to buy out landlords and leave the powers behind. If the original and indestructible powers of the soil are created for rent, then they are created for landlords, for there can be no rent without landlords. And so sacred do I regard every human right that I say if this be so, landlords must not be disturbed at all. I call upon the Economists and the Government of England to be honest about it and issue their proclamation to the world that God made all the varieties of soils and all the inherent and indestructible powers of soils specially for landlords, and specially with the view of rent for landlords.

Q. Is it really as absurd to claim recompense for the use of the natural powers of the soil as to claim recompense for the natural powers of the sunshine?

A. It is. Did you ever see a bushel of wheat, or a barrel of flour, or a stone of meal, or a side of mutton or bacon, that had not embodied in it the natural powers of the sunshine as well as the natural powers of the soil?

Q. Does not the fact that some marauding baron of old climbed some high hill and *looked* over an entire country side and said, "All this is mine," give him the right to all the natural and indestructible powers of all the lands over which he may have happened to cast his baronial eye?

A. No more than if he had said, "All this sunshine, all this free air now playing around me, all the refreshing rains hereafter to fall over this magnificent country before me are mine, and let no man dare to enjoy them without paying to me tribute for their use." Don't be startled, pray. There are tens of thousands of respectable citizens around you who yet believe in all this rubbish as most religious truth, and who would, perhaps, advocate the drawing of the sword to defend the same. And if the great and imperishable laws of political economy confront them to their face, they will, with all the gravity of wise men, spread before you some miserable bit of old parchment signed by some truculent knave who hardly knew how to trace his name, and will gravely tell you that this bit of musty parchment is ample justification for the disinheritance of the present and of

unborn generations. Such is our modern Christianity, and to such a pass has it brought the human mind.

Q. If the English system as to rent be true—that the use of the natural qualities, forces, or powers of the soil, are destined by God for landlords alone, and not for the tillers, what do you make of national decrees which have divided up the lands among the tillers?

A. The statesman Stein, in dividing up the lands of Prussia among the tillers, on payment by instalments, of so many years' rental, confiscated, according to the economists, rights which could never be alienated. And the same of the lands of France with its millions of landed proprietors who till their own farms.

Q. Would not the people of France, of Prussia, of the Channel Islands, and of many other European countries, who till their own farms, be all in a false position if the economists' doctrines be true?

A. Undoubtedly. A natural law would have been destroyed—the natural and indestructible powers of the soil would have been taken from landlords for whom God, it is said, designed them, and given to tillers for whom they were never designed. In a word, natural laws would be all topsy-turvy.

Q. And yet is not this great land reform in these countries the glory of Stein, of Prussia, of France, etc.?

A. It is almost universally admitted to be so.

Q. And have not great prosperity and national thrift accompanied these acts?

A. Yes. Even in Prussia they have struggled through the payment of the indemnity. But what could be done then probably could not be done now. Poverty in these latter years has stamped its seal too deeply on the masses.

Q. If Mr. Gladstone and his Cabinet propose to "buy out" the landlords, what should be done?

A. I would let loose all the political economists of England upon them. I would call on every Professor of Political Economy to rush to the rescue of his landlords. I would tell them to stand as one man in the breach in defence of their economic doctrines. I would urge them to impeach good Mr. Gladstone and his Cabinet for high treason against the laws of English political economy, of God, and of the landlords. What! confiscate the great powers of the soil of Great Britain and Ireland, the original and indestructible powers of the entire land, all created for the benefit of landlords for all time! Confiscate all this for a beggarly twenty or thirty years' purchase! No, no, Mr. Gladstone, you dare not propose it. You dare not be so cruel to the unborn generations of landlords. Rights such as these must be respected. Why, your present Postmaster-General, Mr. Fawcett, good man, would turn himself inside out at such an onslaught on his doctrine as to the inalienable, original, inherent, indestructible, economic, natural powers of the soil, all in such close relationship to the comfort and well-being of landlords. No, no, the economists of England must not eat such humble pie.

Q. Let us look very closely into this matter. Does not the claim that rent is constituted of all the difference between the produce of barren soils and the produce of rich soils (for the economists, and notably Mr. Mill, say that there is no land so barren but it will pay to cultivate), *in reality throw into the pockets of the landlords the great bulk of all the good things produced from this teeming earth?*

A. Let us be honest. Let us face it. That is the claim. That is the position. I repeat, it is high time the world should know it. I have witnesses, plenty, plenty. They clamor around me by the million. Ireland is witness, Scotland is witness, England is witness. Every ruined family, every hopeless and broken-hearted toiler is witness. Mr. Gladstone, the Premier of England, is witness, for he has publicly declared that an Irish eviction is something tantamount to a sentence of death, or words nearly to that effect. It is clear as the sun at noon-day that the English doctrine as to rent has precisely the issue your question states. Will the people permit such a terrible system to work their ruin for ever? If these doctrines of the English economists be not brigandage and piracy, pray define to us the meaning of brigandage and piracy.

Q. Are the fat oxen, the fat sheep, the good butter cows, reared on the barren or on the rich soils?

A. On the good soils.

Q. Is the plump and well-ripened grain, the sweet and nutritious vegetables, the rich and full produce of the glowing orchards, the apples, the pears, and other fruits, the barns bursting with plenty, the barn yards filled with abundance of good things; are these the products of the barren or of the good soils?

A. Of the good soils.

Q. Then, according to the economists, all these good things, or the great bulk of all these good things, are for the landlords, are they not? Don't they represent rent, as we are told?

A. Yes. I suppose it might be said in all truth that the fat and well favored kine, and the full and good ears of corn, come forth branded L; and the lean and ill-favored kine, and the ears wthered, thin, and blasted with the east wnd, come forth branded with the letter T; and I suppose you know what nature means by these letters, according to the economists and the landlords.

Montreal, 2nd February, 1881.

## No. 10.

**THE ENGLISH SYSTEM A DEATH SENTENCE ON THE HUMAN RACE.—BARE NECESSITY THE RULING MEASURE.—ONLY THE PRODUCE OF THE POOREST SOIL IS THE PRODUCER'S —ABOVE THAT IS RENT AND THE LANDLORD'S.—THE OLD MORALISTS ALL ASTRAY.—THE MAXIMS OF JUSTICE AND THE RULE OF LIFE CHANGED EXPRESSLY FOR THE IDLER'S BENEFIT.**

**QUESTION.** What do you say of the following quotation from J. R. McCulloch's Principles of Political Economy: "Suppose now, that the consumers offer such a price as will pay the expense of producing corn on soils which, in return for the same expenditure as would have produced 100 quarters on lands of the *first quality*, will only yield 90 quarters; it is plain it will then be indifferent to a farmer whether he pays a rent of ten quarters for the first quality of land or farms the second quality, which is unappropriated and open to him, without paying any rent. If the appropriation went on increasing, lands which would yield only 80, 70, 60, 50, etc., quarters in return for *the same expenditure that had obtained 100 quarters from the best lands*, might be successfully brought under cultivation."

**ANSWER.**—It is simply an attempt to prove, somewhat by another form of argument, the hateful and destructive doctrine we have discussed at preceding interviews—that the produce of all the good soils is destined, as rent, for the pockets of the landlords, and that nothing is left for the farmers but the produce of the barren or poor soils. In fact, if you can only crush a tiller down to cultivate almost a bare rock, this doctrine will march in with the landlord at its back and, snatch away the fruits of all lands above this bare standard, and claim them as its own in the name of God, of nature, of political economy. Mr. McCulloch says plainly, in the same connection, that if poor land yields 60 quarters of grain, then the rent of the best quality is 40 quarters. Here are his words; listen to them and see where such a doctrine will land you: "Suppose, for example, that the worst quality under cultivation yields 60 quarters, then the rent of the *first quality* will be 40 quarters, or 100 minus 60; the rent of the *second quality* will, in like manner, be equal to the difference between 90 and 60, or 30 quarters; the rent of the third quality will be equal to 80 minus 60, or 20 quarters, and so on." The same English doctrine, you perceive, as we have been discussing at previous interviews.

Q. Is not Mr. McCulloch, in his opening remarks, assuming a false economic position when he sets forth that consumers will pay as much for the yield of 80 quarters of grain as for the 100 quarters?

A. He is. The price per bushel of the grain of the 90 quarters will be the same as the price per bushel of the grain of the 100 quarters. People are not going to exchange 100 quarters of grain for 90 quarters. But Mr. McCulloch begins to build his rent theory on this ridiculous assumption. And he says it is plain that it will be indifferent to a farmer whether he pays a rent of ten quarters for the first quality of land, or farms the second quality without paying any rent at all. True. It is a matter of indifference to the farmer *how* he is to be robbed of these ten quarters of grain out of every hundred he produces, if the fates and the Economists have determined that he *shall* be robbed, and have so arranged matters that the farming population shall not dare to utter a complaint. But is it a matter of

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indifference to farmers to know what right anybody has to take away 10 of his quarters of grain out of every hundred he and his family produce by their toil? Is it a matter of indifference to the starving multitudes in the United Kingdom what becomes of the 30, 40, 50 quarters of grain, or of the value of these quarters, taken out of every 100 quarters raised in that kingdom for the sustenance of its people? Is it a matter of indifference to the millions in Great Britain and Ireland whether they pay 6d. for every loaf or a shilling for every loaf?

Q. Is it simply a money question?

A. Not at all; it is not a question of mere money. It is a far deeper question than that. It is a matter of "indifference" to tillers, if they are to be robbed, whether they lose 40 quarters out of every 100, or 4 quarters out of every 10, or eight shillings out of every pound sterling. So far it is all as broad as it is long.

Q. How do the Economists mix up with the question of rents the question of prices?

A. The argument does not at all differ. They do it in this way. They say the tillers of the bare and barren lands must sell their produce at such a price as will enable them just to preserve life; that the produce of the poorest land in cultivation will be sold at what they call its *necessary price*; and that these prices will, in the aggregate, from the rich soils, yield a great surplus as compared with the aggregate of the money produce of the toil of the poor tillers; and that *it is this surplus which forms rent*. The same argument you see. Not one whit different. All the *surplus* above bare life taken in name of rent, whether you call it money or quarters of grain, or carcasses of beef, mutton, and pork. In fact, Mr. McCulloch uses the following language in the very midst of his money argument: "The proprietors of the superior lands obtain rents: but this is the necessary result of their *greater fertility*;" and it is McCulloch himself who emphasizes the two last words in the quotation. But the money argument and the corn argument are like a sweeping rain that leaveth no food.

Let us here quote a few words from Scripture: "He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread." Nay, say the Economists, he shall have penury—no plenty for him—the abundance is for a few lords of the land.

"He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread." All a mistake, say the Economists; the rent-taker must be first "satisfied," and he will take all. "Satisfied" is not a word for the tiller's vocabulary. Solomon knew nothing about it. He had heard nothing about the proverbs of Landlordism. He knew nothing about the wonders of English political economy.

"He that gathereth by labor shall increase." Not at all, cry the Economists; he that gathereth in rents shall increase. Solomon is all astray. He did not know that all above the most barren soil is for my lord's treasury. Gather by labor! Who ever heard of such a thing? Let all tillers company with the wild ass of Job, and make "the barren lands their dwellings."

"Much food is in the tillage of the poor." All rank heresy, cry the Economists with one voice—the much food is in the rent roll. The tillage of the poor, forsooth—it is the landlord's tillage. We know all about it, for we have written standard works on political economy.

The earth bringeth forth herbs *meet for them by whom it is dressed*." All nonsense, chorus the landlords. Paul was a radical. If you want the true doctrine, read and study the leaders in our daily press. There you will get the whole-some doctrine as to landlordism, not from a communist like Paul.

Believe me, a gloomier doctrine than this has never been imposed upon the world. This English system, were it true, would settle the doom of the human race for ever. It is a sentence of death in presence of which the joy of the land is gone and the hope of humanity is fled. The worst communism that has ever been proposed would be a paradise compared with it. Is it any wonder that the merry singers of the soil have ceased from their carols, and that you meet instead the muttered curse upon the lips and the scowl upon the brow? Let every good man rejoice that people are now sifting this thing to the bottom.

Q. Has Mr. McCulloch any further theory that it is worth our while to examine?

A. There is one to which I may draw your attention. He says that the average price of all the farm products raised on the better soils is arbitrarily regulated by the cost of production or labor spent on raising the produce from the poor and barren soils; and hence, he adds, it is plainly the same thing to the consumers whether, in an advanced stage of society, the excess of return over the cost of production on lands of the first quality belongs to a non-resident landlord or an occupier. It *must* belong to one or the other. Here is a strange plea for absenteeism. I may add that the Economists echo each other's opinions to the same effect on this point.

Q. Now, is it true that the labor spent on the barren soils has the arbitrary power of determining the value of the labor spent on the superior soils?

A. It is wholly untrue. The average price, so far as bushel is related to bushel, is determined by the average cost of producing *all* the grain or produce. The plenty from the good soils has an influence on the scanty returns from the poor soils, just as the scanty returns have an influence on the full returns. If Mr. McCulloch's doctrine were true, then, in every case, the meagre product of the poor and unskillful workmen would have the mastery over the superior goods turned out by the men of activity, skill, and brains, and indifferent workmen would have the power of running the superior workmen off the market.

Q. Then of course his argument as to it being a matter of indifference whether the fruits of the good soils belong to a non-resident landlord or to an occupier, falls to the ground, does it not?

A. It does. Even were it a matter of indifference, as he says, to consumers in general, surely it could not be such to the occupiers or cultivators. All these economic arguments, apparently so dexterously framed, only need a little close examination to show what sort of stuff they are made of.

Q. Is there anything further in this Author worthy of reference in this connection?

A. There is; but let us be content with one more quotation, so as not to make too long delay over one writer: "Suppose there is an effectual demand for ten millions of quarters, and that it is necessary to raise *one* million of these quarters on lands which yield nothing but the common and average rate of profit to their cultivators, it is clear that the relinquishing of the rents payable on the superior lands would be no boon whatever to the cultivators of the inferior lands." Mr. McCulloch here endeavors to throw light on the subject by an argument to this effect—that the giving up of all rents would not practically benefit a single tiller whose fate it was to labor on lands so poor as to pay no rent. He might as well tell us that there are more ways of killing a dog than by hanging him. It would just be as instructive.

Q. But, then, has not this doctrine already sent *all* tillers down to that level? Does it not take away *all* surplus over and above what can be got out of the most barren soils? Would not leaving that surplus where it was produced instantly benefit all its producers and raise them in the social scale?

A. True; but Mr. McCulloch passes that all by. Extinguishing rent, he says, would be no benefit to the poor wretches unable to pay any rents. It is something like telling a drowning man, for his special edification and comfort, that as throwing him a ten foot rope when he is struggling a hundred yards away would be no boon to him whatever, one need not throw him a rope at all. Or like telling a man you have robbed and crippled for life, that as he cannot now use his limbs there is no use in providing any sustenance for him.

Q. Then, let us now lay him aside, and look into Mill. What does this celebrated writer say about rent? Does he hold to these views of the Economists?

A. Substantially he does. How thoroughly was a great mind overborne by a stupendous error when he penned such sentences as these: "The rent which any land will yield is the excess of its produce beyond what would be returned to the

same capital if employed on the worst land in cultivation." This view of rent "is one of the cardinal doctrines of political economy." Again, "Whoever does pay rent gets back its full value in extra advantages, and the rent which he pays does not place him in a worse position than, but only in the same position as, his fellow-producer who pays no rent, but whose instrument (land) is one of inferior efficiency." My only feeling is one of sadness in having to quote such sentences from an author who has done so much for political economy, and who is manifestly so much in sympathy with toiling men.

Q. I notice that the Economists fall into the habit of shoving out the idea of labor, of industry, of toil, and of shoving in as a substitute the idea of something they call capital. How is this? Is it not always labor that is applied to the land?

A. It is. By this sort of argument the subject becomes obscured to the Economists themselves as well as to their readers. They want Industry to yield a return for Tools as well as for Tillers. We will have to treat it fully in order to make our discussion complete. But we will put it aside at present and give it at a future interview deliberate and full examination.

Q. Is there not a manifest contradiction involved in the last quoted sentence from Mr. Mill?

A. There is. For if the farmer of the good lands pays away, as rent, all that he makes over and above the equivalent of what is made by the farmer on the barren soil who is unable to pay any rent at all, how does he get, as Mr. Mill says, any "extra advantages"? Are they not both as wretched as any poor wretch can be? And if, on the other hand, he does get back extra advantages, how then can he be said to be just in the same position as his fellow toiler on the barren land?

Q. Does Mr. Mill mean by an "instrument of inferior efficiency," a barren and sorry spot, a complement of acres of "blasted heath," from which hope has long since fled, and where despondency ever dogs the steps of the cheerless and sparing husbandman?

A. Yes; such, according to the Economists, is the husbandman's inevitable fate. You need now be at no loss to understand how it comes to pass that under such teaching in full operation, an entire nation has sunk down into listlessness and indifference; how the word "progress" has been blotted from its lexicon, and how a process of confiscation of labor and the fruits of labor is in force, which, the moment that an appearance of improvement is evidenced, pounces down upon it as the eagle upon its prey. This rent doctrine will leave you nothing which it can possibly take away. If it be true, it has the right to force you down to the starving point, and to charge you with extravagant living if it sees you with a Sunday coat to your back, or butcher meat on your table once a week or once a month. If the fruits of the most barren soil which can be cultivated are all that the husbandman has a right to claim, then he has no right to lift himself above the condition of the poorest and most rack-rented starveling in all Ireland; rags, wretchedness, dirt, and poverty are his proper and inseparable companions; a garland of joy may never once be worn on his aching brow; blooming fields, and bending grain, and smiling meadows, and lowing cattle, are but a mockery of his toil; the lark's blithesome morning song only a satire on a life over which the dreaded eviction ever hangs, and where hope may never once lift its eye from the fair scene spread around. If rent, as thus interpreted, is a right thing, then Griffith's valuation, or any valuation, is no barrier to its exactions—if it be a wrong thing, then Griffith's valuation, or any valuation, has no right to stand on the statute-books in connection with it. If this withering doctrine as to rent be true, you cannot legislate the smallest improvement on the farm into the pockets of the tillers. To do so would be to destroy the claim. There must be no confiscation of the so-called rights of property in reference to this question. Let us call Political Economy itself upon the stage, and let it give the verdict. If the English Economists are correct, then no Government has any right to compel landlords to give leases to anybody, or to sit as umpire on the question of rents, or to legislate about three F's, or a thousand F's. Let us shed all the ink we please over the

question, but not one drop of blood. I challenge all the literature of England to establish this that Mill calls "one of the cardinal doctrines of political economy"—that it is part and parcel of the established constitution of things that the great world of industry is destined to receive as its share only the barest possible returns from the barest possible soils. Before all the world, I challenge it as an infamous doctrine, a burlesque on humanity, a caricature of Christianity, a piracy on industry, on commerce, on economy. I charge it with being a confiscation of property, an inroad upon the rights of labor, unequalled in its deep atrocity by any system of communism of which I have ever heard or read. I charge it with being the most shameless perversion of truth which has ever been imposed upon a thoughtless world. In a word, it is nothing short of a death-warrant for the human race. And I charge the Government of England with the attempt to force upon humanity, at the bayonet's point, this atrocious and terrible doctrine, this sentence of death.

Montreal, 9th February, 1881.

(NOTE.—Some quotations are here added which were by accident omitted in the original papers. A book has just been published, entitled, "The Garden of India; or, Chapters on Oudh History and Affairs," by Mr. H. C. Irwin of the Bengal Civil Service. The province of Oudh in India has been for twenty years under British rule. Let this author speak as to former prosperous condition and what it is now after twenty years of that rule. The province is beggared, its cultivators in misery, rags, and wretchedness. I would say to the reader, however, that from Indian Blue Books which I have consulted years ago I gather that the general condition of the rural population of the Indian empire is not far removed, if anything, from that of Oudh, a condition so fearful as to have startled even a Bengal Civil Service officer out of his propriety. Mr. Irwin informs us that 1½ million pounds sterling are annually raised by taxation, of which £900,000 are spent on Indian officials outside of Oudh. Listen to what he says: "Taking the poor as a whole it is scarcely too much to say that a large proportion of cultivators have neither food sufficient to keep them in health nor clothes sufficient to protect them from the weather; that their cattle are miserably thin and weak from under feeding; that they are hardly ever out of debt for twelve months together; and are generally dependent on the money lender for their food from two to six months in the year. Well fed looking men are certainly the exception among them, rather than the rule, and it is notorious that the able-bodied adult convict nearly always increases in weight after a few months on a jail diet of 24 ounces. The condition of the Oudh cultivator might seem to be life reduced to its lowest terms. But there are hundreds of thousands all over the Province compared with whom he, as Lear has it, is "sophisticated"; the landless village laborer is the thing itself! Everywhere in every hamlet there is a residuum of half clad starvelings who have no cattle and no means of livelihood save, perhaps, a tiny patch of space-filled land and their labor, remunerated at the rate of 4 lbs. of coarse grain, or of three half-pence, or at most two-pence farthing a day. And even this wretched employment is not procured all the year round. How, underfed and almost unclothed as they are, they continue to live through the cold nights of winter, which are often spent in field watching to keep off thieves, human and other, is a standing marvel."

And yet Oudh, only twenty years since, was remarkable for its "general pros-

perity, happiness and wealth." Look, then, at Ireland at one end of the Empire and Oudh at the other. Is it the "night thieves and others," one may well ask, who have done all this mischief to Oudh?

Now, let me quote from another work just issued, "England's work in India," by Dr. W. W. Hunter, a leading authority in Indian literature and a civil servant of the East India Government:—"A large and prosperous body of proprietors has grown up under our rule. Their prosperity has resulted partly from their own good management, but chiefly from the husbandmen having been forced by their growing numbers to bring into tillage the inferior lands, and from the natural increase of rent to which that process gives rise as regards the superior soils." So Dr. Hunter has been reading the Economists, but he does not see the biting sarcasm of his own words. Here the over-population theory is again made the scape-goat of English misrule. What sort of economy is that which makes "a large and prosperous body of proprietors" to grow up in India as a consequence of the producers being "forced" on to inferior soils? It is the same problem, you see, in distant India. And yet there is land in India sufficient to give every man, woman and child about 17 acres, or say 80 acres to each family. Little did poor Malthus and Ricardo think they would thus be called upon to do duty over Irish and Indian decay with their accompanying famines.

Dr. Hunter, in the following quotation, puts the Irish problem in India in a nutshell: "The ever-increasing rack-rents exacted by the landlords from the tenants without leases or occupancy rights form the great complaint of the rural population, and one of the most difficult problems with which the Government has to deal." Exactly.

It appears that the drama has always been a great popular educator in India. In 1879 there was a play written and enacted in Bengal called the *Nilpardon* or the Indigo Factory, which became the subject of judicial trial in Calcutta; and another play was produced with this, to Englishmen, suggestive title "Ekei ki bale Sabhyata," or "Is this what you call civilisation?" So the Indian mind is also beginning to think for itself.

It appears from Dr. Hunter's book that there is an agrarian war spreading in India. He informs us that the rates of interest paid by the farmers range from  $12\frac{1}{2}$  up to 37 per cent. per annum. "He (the village banker or usurer) can put the peasant to extremities by eviction, which was economically impossible under native rule." I had marked some significant paragraphs for quotation, but regret that there is not room for further remarks from Dr. Hunter's pages.)

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omitted in Garden of win of the twenty years dition and gaged, its under, how rather that is not far we startled ms us that £900,000 "Taking on of cul sufficient to weak from together; wo to six on among alt convict 24 ounces. its lowest ared with s the thing elings who pade-rifled or of three vi employ unclothed are often g marvel." General pros

## No. 11.

LORD DUFFERIN'S "NECESSITY OF RENT," (FOR THE LAND-LORDS).—HOW HIS "LORDSHIP" WAKED UP TOO LATE.—IRELAND'S COMMON-SENSE PEOPLE SETTLING RENT'S UNREASONABLENESS.—THE IDLERS' BLACKMAIL UNDER DISSECTION.—RULED OUT BY GOD, NATURE, LABOR, SCIENCE, JUSTICE, AND ALL THAT'S GOOD.—EMIGRATION NO CURE.—IT DOES NOT RID A NATION OF THE EVIL IF THE FUNDAMENTAL WRONG IS IN THE TENURE OF THE SOIL.

QUESTION. Lord Dufferin has just now published a pamphlet on the Irish agricultural question. He says: "The problem is to make it the interest of the peasantry to recognize the reasonableness and the necessity of rent." What do you think of that statement?

ANSWER. His lordship has indeed a pretty tough "problem" on hand. It is hopeful to see so distinguished an Irish peer recognize it as a "problem" at all. Yes, a tough problem, a tough problem. The "reasonableness" and the "necessity" of rent! I fear that Pat, all over Ireland, is getting the heels of his lordship on that problem. I fear that he will never "recognize" that "reasonableness" any more. The truth is the "peasant" has solved the problem, and left the peer far behind in the race. Intellect has been at work—some thinking has been done—countless pages have been read—political economy is being studied, stripped of its nonsense and rubbish—a torch has been kindled in every Irish cabin which by God's grace shall never be extinguished. Let me put the problem in this way for his lordship's consideration: We must make it the interest of both peer and peasant to recognize the unreasonableness and the destructive character of rent. And I think Lord Dufferin is too noble a man, in the true sense of the word, not to give the problem attention when fairly placed before him in its true light. There may be noble men among the aristocracy to whom truth is dearer than all the broad lands you could place at their disposal, and perhaps not a few of them may yet be found to cast their landlord spectacles in the fire, and stand up like true men in defence of popular rights and popular freedom, and of that equitable division of the land which is at once the ordinance of God and the foundation and security of a nation's prosperity and strength.

Q. Lord Dufferin continues: "This can only be done by making him an owner upon a very extensive scale—upon such a scale as to render it the interest of the greater part of the population to insist upon the remainder fulfilling their legal obligations." What do you think of the proposed cure?

A. A most astounding cure, indeed, for the curse of Ireland—to create a fresh batch of landlords; not so large, indeed, as to lay claim to half a county apiece, but still large enough to hold the balance of power over the cultivators, the payers of rent! It is simply landlordism more intensified and with its skirts a little more widened out than at present. I believe it would make matters worse. Better have things as they are. Better far to have one man like Lord Dufferin, than a thousand petty landlords, each owning enough to enable him to sit idle and draw in from the trembling serfs his five hundred or a thousand pounds a year in name of rent. Save us from petty tyrants and petty tyranny. A whole-souled landlord may be endured, these cannot.

Q. What is your opinion of this sentiment from Lord Dufferin: "Fair rent is a principle to be welcomed as the essential feature of a healthy agriculture?"

A. No words of mine could show more forcibly the necessity for all men, peer and peasant, beginning the study of political economy. Even the Devon Commission did not hesitate to say that the inherent qualities of the soil are the distinct property of the landlords!

Rent is the "principle" which *destroys* agriculture.

Labor rules it out. A farm (by which I mean the labor on a farm) cannot support two families, the members of one the tillers, the members of the other the idlers and rent-drawers.

God rules it out. He taught us, as I have fully shown at preceding interviews, how a nation should divide its lands—enough for each, enough for all, a farm for each family, each tiller an owner, each owner a tiller, ownership and tillage hand in hand. God's instructions to all men on this question are as plainly revealed to us as *any* command in the Decalogue. Rent cannot find a moment's existence under the divine system.

Physical capacity (industry) rules it out. A man in his toil cannot carry an idler on his back.

Rectitude and justice rule it out. Rent is something taken from toil and nothing given. For landlords did not make the land, and landlords did not make the improvements. Even tillers, if owners, did not make the improvements as landlords, but as tillers or workers. And there is nothing but land and improvements in the case. Set these, then, on one side of your ledger, and what have you on the other but a sheet of white paper.

Political economy rules it out. For political economy inexorably demands that equivalents be given; but no economic equivalent can ever be given for rent.

The law of profits rules it out. There is one profit for all toilers and for all tillers; not, as the economists would have us believe, a double profit or a half profit, part for tiller, part for landlord.

And the common sense of humanity is going to rule it out. For political economy teaches us that sums of money paid in name of rent are in reality products of men's toil given as equivalents for other products of men's toil—in other words, as PURCHASE MONEY. *This is the stone which is going to grind rent to powder.* This is the question which "a dishomed nation" cannot afford any longer to shirk, and it has begun to move. It is already on the march, and by and by an entire nation, *housed and homed*, will proclaim its redemption and its victory. Let it be proclaimed from every house-top that

WHAT YOU PAY AS RENT IS REALLY PART PURCHASE MONEY OF THE PROPERTY YOU OCCUPY AND CARE FOR.

I shall give you ample economic reasons, at a future interview, for this position. Political economy itself, our grand court of appeal, decides in favor of the claim. Do not fear. We shall not shirk discussion on a question of such stupendous interest.

The safety and continuance of the empire rule it out. This system of land and house tenure and the peace and safety of society are in mortal conflict. If society is to be saved and the true rights of property (rather rights *to* property) respected, rent must perish.

Lord Dufferin must let his notions as to any alliance between rents and healthy agriculture go by the board. Such a peer as Lord Dufferin must not consort with questionable company. Ireland has called "halt" to this merciless plucking of her agricultural goose; and England and Scotland—aye, and all Europe and America—are going to echo the cry. To know and understand these economic questions will give this movement a giant's strength. It won't rest with Ireland, and it won't rest as it is at this moment in Ireland. The destiny of truth is to conquer; and man will in the end come up to the full measure of the economic laws of his being. Short of that man cannot stop, for short of it he will be undone.

Q. What do you think of emigration as a cure for these national troubles ?

A. Of all the vile things proposed, this is amongst the vilest. Suppose (to repeat the illustration I once used in this journal) that a bad and cunning son had managed to appropriate all the rooms in his father's dwelling, and had cast his brethren out to lie in sheds and outhouses, what would you think of the son who suggested and the father who listened and approved the suggestion to cast these brethren out on the world altogether, so as to give no further annoyance by their presence ? But the truth is, emigration would not practically do one bit of good, so far as settling the troubles of Ireland is concerned. That has been tried by the million, and what good has it done ? There is no real pressure on the land. Take away the people, and how soon would even the landlords have to find their graves ? *Immigration* would do good—the introduction from America of a million or so of men who have tasted of the sweets of a free agricultural life. That, indeed, would be a tremendous element in the speedy settlement of the question. "In the multitude of people is the king's honor ; but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince." What can be thought of a government which legislates its people, under penalty, into doing the impossible ; and, then, when the impossible can't be done, ships them off by wholesale ? Any government which would do such a thing by its people courts the undisguised scorn of all men. "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker." It is not thus that we shall ever repair the breach, build the old waste places, or raise up the foundations of many generations. Step by step we propose to repair the industrial and agricultural desolations of past generations by finding out what is the true political economy for the race, and I, for one, will not take one step forward without Truth by my side.

Q. Would you consider an enquiry instituted by the will of the people into the tenure of lands in Ireland, England, and Scotland, to be an enquiry looking to the eviction of owners or to the reinstatement of owners ?

A. To the reinstatement of owners. I speak as an economist. As such I say that there can be no eviction of owners when lands are held without right, for there is no ownership in the case. We must begin at the beginning and enquire as to the economic rights by which land is held, for it is on those rights that all national life and all national tenure of land must be built. This is the enquiry which the people of England, Scotland, and Ireland, are called on to face, and the sooner it is faced the better. For, so far from thinking with some who would fain have things remain as they are, that the time has gone past for such an enquiry, every day that such an enquiry hangs in abeyance is just so much weight and pressure added to the claim. We cannot help it if a few hundreds of people begin to tremble before the investigation. The nation's life is the foremost consideration. The nation must not perish by economic wrong-doing. If England can, by any act of legislation, say to the economic belly, "I have no need of you," then I say let it all rest—let us accept of things as they are. But England has a belly to fill, and it is very clamant, and it has no ordinary capacity. And when the head fails, the belly comes in with its argument which never fails. "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats," says the apostle. It is a homely argument, but there is more in it than what seems on the surface. I commend to the statesmen of England Paul's forcible illustration as to the eternal fitness of things. Prescriptive rights and coercion pills will not go far in filling the economic belly of either England, Scotland, or Ireland. Such pills sometimes have a tendency to purge the men who prescribe them. Not prescriptive or constructive, but *economic* rights is the question now before the English statesman. It is on the latter, and not on the former, that the safety and existence of the empire now depend. The minister who misses this question misses all, and will only drag his country to ruin over his own head.

Q. Does the tillage of land yield anything more than sustenance for the race ? Are there really any "margins" for rent-hunters ?

A. The tillage of land just yields sustenance to the human family. There are no

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margins left as Rent for non-workers or for anybody. The crops produced during the year sustain the race during the year. Even a partial failure of crops shows we have no margins with which to play fast and loose. On the current year's supply of food every nation is utterly dependent. And see how regularly it is all used. It is as if God said to nations : Beware ! do right by my land laws ; take care of your inheritance, mother earth ; she is prolific enough for you all, but she is sensitive to wrong-doing ; she can give "cleanliness of teeth" at will ; she gives you plenty, but no surplus to trifle with: take care, then, how you allow any one to monopolize more than his share of her broad surface and crush and ruin his fellows with rent.

Q. If a nation adopts, as Britain has done, a system of land tenure which sets all this at nought, what are the issues ?

A. God and that nation will be in eternal conflict. Emphatically may it be said : "Her rowers have brought her into great waters." Who will win, God or the wrong-doing nation ? There cannot be peace. Prosperity for "the masses" (excuse for once the vile phrase) will never be attained. The people will be ruined. Agriculture will be destroyed. There cannot be permanent happiness even for the monopolizers. Christianity will exhibit only a lifeless outward form. The statesman who legislates for a system of Landlordism legislates for the worst form of monopoly that has ever cursed the world, and has shut his eyes to the grand purposes of God in creating the earth and in creating man to cultivate and subdue it. He goes to work heedless of the first lesson in his Bible and of the first claim of humanity—the right to live.

Q. I think you have already said that improvements on the farm come out of tillage, not out of ownership ?

A. It is a self-evident truth that every improvement on the land comes out of tillage or toil, not out of ownership. The ownership is simply the possession of the things you make. You call them yours, that is all. The erection of the dwelling, barns, stables, sheds ; the fencing and draining ; the planting of shade and fruit trees ; the making of roads and digging of wells ; the general improvement of the property ; all has been accomplished by the work of the tiller, not a single cent's worth by the landlord as a landlord.

Q. Then, does a landlord ever make an improvement on the land ?

A. Never. The thing is impossible. The tillers make all improvements.

Q. Does the tenant ?

A. Not as a tenant, but as a tiller. The tiller pays all. The laws of England speak to an economic falsehood when they declare of a man who never toiled, never sowed, never reaped, perhaps never saw the farm, never put one cent's worth into it, that that man has erected the buildings and made the improvements.

Q. But doesn't he claim the land ?

A. But the land, apart from improvements or labor, as we have already shown, is valueless, that is, cannot be priced. It has utility, or the capacities of utility, but value, as an economic term and quantity, is the fruit of toil alone. Therefore, whatever the land has of value, must be the property of the tiller, *of the man who placed the value there*, not even of the tenant as tenant, but of the tiller as tiller.

Q. I perceive that when you speak of value it is always in relation to human labor. Is there not a popular sense in which value is spoken of apart from human labor ?

A. There is ; but as an Economist I have nothing to do with popular notions of value. There is no *real* value, no true economic value, apart from human labor. The economic quantity called value, of which a true Economist speaks, and which is embodied in things which may be exchanged, springs from labor only.

Q. Must we apply these economic principles as to land to the case of mines and the workers in mines ?

A. Yes ; these principles are of universal application.

Q. Suppose there were but one coal mine in England, and that this mine happened to be found on the land of one man or family to whom that portion of land had been publicly assigned, and which, as you say, had become his or theirs, or held in possession by them by the process of tillage, could that man or family say to all the people of England: We will not permit any one to touch this coal mine, or extract a single bushel of coal from it?

A. No.

Q. Why not?

A. Because the coal and iron and other mines of England are God's gifts to the people of England; and if one man or one family had the power or privilege you speak of, the people of England might perish from cold. If every man has the right of access to the land for food, every man has the right of access to the coal for fuel.

Q. Does the fact of the local distribution of these indispensable minerals, or the fact that they are (something unlike the land itself) concentrated into particular localities, alter the economic conditions you have placed before me throughout our discussion?

A. Evidently not. It is plain that the mere fact of the concentration of God's free gifts does not alter any economic principle. The iron and the coal of England, where they lie, are as much the inheritance of every child born in England as is the land of England. Every human being who draws the breath of life on English soil is entitled to his share of God's free and gratuitous gifts to the nation of England. He has a right to the means of life. The poorest child of squalor and want has, by the fact of its birth on English ground, as much right to every gift of God scattered over these lands, independently of human toil, as the child of the richest peer. These are great truths, long buried out of sight. But they are moving amongst men now with marvelous rapidity. They go down, as they ought, to the foundation of things. Let us face them. They will do true men no hurt.

Q. What, then, are the conditions of ownership?

A. Just what I have already stated—toil, and toil alone, confers ownership.

Q. If a hundred men work a coal pit, who owns the coal pit?

A. Not the hundred men. For the coal pit can no more be absolutely owned than the land itself can be absolutely owned.

Q. But these hundred men may buy it?

A. Buy it! From whom could they buy it? What man has the right to sell it? He has no more right to sell undug coal in the earth than uncaught salmon in the sea, the wild bird upon the wing, or the ray of sunlight glancing from the heavens.

Q. What, then, do they own?

A. The coal they excavate and bring to the surface.

Q. Then you come to the conclusion, do you not, that the poorest man in England is entitled to receive the coal at his door at an exactly equivalent amount in labor given by him for the labor embodied in the ton of coal, and no more? No monopoly money? No ground rent money, etc.? No money for coal as coal and also for labor in the coal?

A. That is it—there you strike the truth.

Q. Is all this the same as the case with regard to the farm?

A. Just the same. The soil, the actual soil, cannot be sold. The produce from the soil is owned and sold for as much human labor as there is in it, for it is the product of labor. The coal, irrespective of labor, cannot be sold. But it is mined, and the portion of coal extracted is the produce from the pit, is owned and sold, for it is the product of labor. Not the slightest economic difference, you perceive, between the two cases. Coal extracted by toil, all improvements, machinery, and so forth, about the pit, can be sold. Coal in the bowels of the earth, untouched by human hand, can no more be sold than wild land in the far Northwest untouched by human hand, or the shoals of codfish feeding at this moment on the banks of Newfoundland.

Q. Is there any law, then, which would prevent people flocking in crowds to coal pits and mines, blocking each other's way?

A. Yes, a sure law; and one all the more sure because not embodied in statute-books, but imbedded deep in the domain of Political Economy itself. But we will reserve it for our next interview, and meantime let us think well over what we have discussed.

Montreal, 16th Feb., 1881.

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(NOTE.—I extract the following sentences from an article contributed by me to the IRISH WORLD, March, 1880 :

If I had the cure of the Irish Land Question in my hands, I would instantly apply the law of God, the so-called Mosaic law. I would say to every Landlord : Here are 150, or 200, or 250 acres for you and your family. Go dwell on it and dress it and keep it and improve it. Be industrious and not idle. Raise your crops and live a freeman. The nation that does not apply this law will sooner or later cease from being a nation, and will deserve its fate. You may call it *limitation* of ownership if you like, though I do not fancy the word. I would rather call it *giving* of ownership, or, what is perhaps better still, staking our your limits.—ENOUGH FOR EACH, ENOUGH FOR ALL. *But only take care and have your limit*, I would do this because political economy teaches me that there is no such think as *Rent*. It is a slice, and a big one, out of Labor—taking without giving. It is a bigger question, this of Rent, than people think.

I would do this because it would be the *best thing*, not only for the people, but for the so-called landlords themselves. They would have *plenty*, every comfort they could desire—they would be useful members of the Commonwealth. And, not least, that vast demoralization flowing to English society from the expenditure of these countless millions drawn out of Ireland, would instantly cease. There would be less horse-racing, less gambling, less high and fast living, less luxurious enervation and lassitude, less flunkyness, but there would be more solidity, more national independence and strength, more social virtue, more happiness, more riches, more manhood, more of everything good over all the land.)

## No. 12.

**FREEDOM OF ACCESS THE GREAT REGULATOR OF SOCIAL EQUALITY.—THE MATTER OF OWNERSHIP.—ALL TILLERS' FRUITS ARE THEIRS BECAUSE THEY TILL—OWNERSHIP PRODUCES NOTHING—THEN WHY REWARD IT?—NO OVERCROWDING WHERE LAND IS FREE.—MONOPOLY OF GOD'S GIFTS TO ALL AN ENEMY TO HUMAN LABOR AND TO ITS PROPER DISTRIBUTION.—CANADA LIKEWISE ON THE DOWNWARD GRADE.**

**QUESTION.** What is that law to which you referred at last interview which would prevent an overcrowding of particular departments of labor, of coal or iron mines for example?

**ANSWER.** The general and healthful law, which, *unobstructed*, would secure the general and healthful distribution of labor everywhere.

**Q.** But what is this law which secures that men will not crush each other in the race of life or obstruct each other in the acquisition of needful things.

**A.** Broadly stated, it is this—the necessity under which the human race is placed of obtaining, not coal only, not iron only, but generally all the commodities, fruits, produce, and good things necessary for its existence, happiness and prosperity.

**Q.** Yes, I perceive that law. Still, it seems to me something else is needed to shew *how* the general healthful distribution of labor is to be regulated. Is it not so?

**A.** Quite correct. The definition needs this in addition : that there must be no monopoly of God's free gifts to the race—that the land, the coal mine, the iron mine, the diamond field, the gold mine, the silver mine, the slate quarry, the marble quarry, all must be free to the labor of man as they are free gifts to man. Do you not perceive that this freedom of access is one of the very things to prevent crushing and crowding in the race? Monopolize these gifts, and from that moment crowding begins. It is like drawing a sluice-gate across a rapid stream—the waters will become more turbulent than before. Now, perhaps you are under the impression that men would crowd more to the gold and silver mines than to the slate or iron mines. Under my definition, they would not. The product of the slate or iron or coal mine would be just as valuable as the product of the diamond field, or of the gold or silver mine. For there would be nothing but human labor entering into the computation of the value of the gold, the silver, the diamond, the slate, the coal, the marble, the iron. That is to say, nothing but human labor would be paid for—there would be no price for monopoly ; no price for the free materials from the hand of nature ; no price for God's free gifts. The human labor would be the factor to determine the value of each commodity, when confronted with another commodity ; so much slate or marble, for example, according to the output, for so much diamond or gold, according to the output. And each department of labor would receive its exact quota of labor under the operation of an economic law which, in such equitable circumstances, would have a self-determining power of bringing prices to a level and of keeping them at a level. For any particular output, by a fall in price relative to all the other minerals, would manifest a superabundance of labor in that department, and would not be long in correcting itself. We thus perceive how great an enemy a monopoly of God's free gifts is to human labor itself, as well as to the free and healthful distribution of that labor.

Q. Does my digging a hole through the earth to a mineral bed give me a title to the ownership of millions of tons of coal below?

A. No more than your erecting a house windmill by the Hudson River for a supply of water for your dwelling and offices would give you a title to all the waters of the Hudson; or the spreading of your sails as you go out to sea would give you a title to all the winds that blow.

Q. If a man, by digging down to a bed of coal, claims ownership of millions of tons lying there, may he not claim exclusive ownership of all the air in a parish because he has breathed it?

A. The claims would be exactly parallel.

Q. Are rivers free to all?

A. Yes; every man is as free to pass along river banks as to pass along the sea shore.

Q. To whom do the fish in the rivers belong?

A. To those who catch them.

Q. To whom do the salmon and other fish on the sea coasts belong?

A. To those who catch them.

Q. Can any man, because his portion of land stretches towards the sea shore, claim the salmon or other fishes feeding off that coast?

A. The claim is absurd. He has no more right to them than he has to your coat on your back.

Q. Is the sea shore public property?

A. Undoubtedly.

Q. To whom do wild birds and other wild animals belong?

A. To those who secure them.

Q. Is it not the case that in your own Dominion, the Government has monopolized even the wild rivers of Labrador, and indeed all round the Gulf, so as to secure them for the uninterrupted sport of the English aristocracy and others?

A. It is true. The people, the settlers, on these leased rivers dare not catch a wild salmon from the pools! It shows what abject slaves we are.

Q. But does not the indiscriminate destruction of the fish do harm?

A. That is a different subject.

Q. You almost begin to make me think that Jean Baptiste was too cute for Jonathan in taking five millions of dollars out of his pocket for wild sea fish on the Atlantic coast. Are we sure that we have not been paying for our own fish? Who knows but these haddocks and cod were all yesterday on the coast of Maine? Wouldn't we have the right to follow our own cod and haddock and mackerel that had gone astray and take them anywhere out of the sea? Doesn't the whole thing look pretty much like humbug?

A. Really, perhaps that is the best name for it.

Q. To return to this question of the distribution of labor. Has this law of distribution any connection with money or the race for money?

A. Not directly. But money, were it generally distributed and used, would doubtless prove an important factor in the *preservation* of this law of the general distribution of labor. The necessity, as I have said, which exists that the human race must have a full supply of *all* necessary things has a powerful effect in distributing human labor in an equitable proportion over every department of toil, and this being primarily the case, money, being a concrete embodiment of human labor and removed in its nature almost beyond the range of those influences which determine fluctuations in prices of other commodities (I have shown these relations and fluctuations fully in my recent work, "Silver in its Relation to Industry and Trade: the danger of demonetizing it") would, were it supplied from hand to hand as men exchanged the products of their toil, and not otherwise, act powerfully in preserving intact this general and healthful distribution of labor in all departments of human activity and industry. For it is a law in monetary science that labor when entrusted to or wrapped up in money—that is, when the toil of the hand takes the form of pieces of money dug from the mines—is then passed on

from hand to hand and from age to age, not only with absolute security, but subject to the smallest conceivable influences tending to alter or in any way prejudice the value of that labor relative to all products of human toil. Money, true money, wherever and whenever labor puts it to the test, is a true friend of the working-man. It carries value faithfully from trade to trade and preserves that value to the toiler when everything else fails. Value is perpetuated, or simply repeated, by true money in every act of exchange. How needful, therefore, that metallic money—true money—should be abroad in the hands of the producers. The moment a paper currency is introduced, the true circle of value in exchange is destroyed.

Q. Do you hold, then, that money should always accompany and be in the hand of labor; should always follow the goods; should be in full supply, and only in supply, as labor itself is in supply, or in full supply? In a word, that where labor is, money should be?

A. That is the only supply of money which I, as an Economist, can recognize. All other demand and supply of money must be destructive of labor. It is on the *presence* of money, not on its *absence*, that price must ever be built. The happiness and the progress of the race does not consist in a supply of money here or a supply of money there; of a craving for it on this hand or that hand; of full pockets in this street and of empty pockets and squalor in that street; of a transference of millions from this vault to that vault. I would not waste a moment in looking into Custom House returns or schedules of imports or exports for *evidence of the condition of the people of a nation*. It would be but wasted time. If you want to know if a nation thrives, look into the homes of its workers, not into Custom House or other statistics.

Q. How would money, even in a true economic condition of things, form a factor in the distribution of labor?

A. By a simple monetary law. The *falling* prices of a commodity, as compared with the general prices of other commodities, would indicate that such a commodity was in over-production; and the *rising* prices of a commodity, as compared with general prices of other things, would indicate that such a commodity was in under-production. The higher prices obtained would tend to draw increased labor to the production of the things for which higher prices were being obtained. In fact, this is the economic law which must ever prevail as related to the distribution of labor, and to what is popularly understood by demand and supply; and it would prevail so long as the presence of *money* in this world gives assistance to and sustains *price*.

So you see, as I said, there is some difference between laws embodied in statute-books and laws embedded deep in political economy. And what shall we say when we find these laws in direct conflict?

Q. When one has monopolized a large territory, and then charges the tillers of the soil a rent or tax for the privilege of tilling that territory, and lays out the money on the erection of buildings, or on other improvements on the land, whose money is he spending—his own or the tillers'?

A. The earnings of the tiller. The tiller produced the crop—the tiller, therefore, produced the money for which that crop was sold.

Q. I think you have made it plain beyond all dispute that the landlord *produces* nothing. It seems as if I were hedged up to the single fact of *ownership*. On that I must ground my claim. I am going to use powerful lances against you. Are you ready for the assault?

A. Yes; go ahead; make all you can of it; use the strongest lances on which you can lay your hand.

Q. Well, then, I own the land and another tills the land. Why should I not share in the good things produced?

A. Well, then, there are no good things produced *for you*, for ownership never produces. Though you say you own a whole county, your ownership produces nothing. Ownership in England produces as little as ownership in the moon.

The tiller produces for himself because he tills, not because he owns. There is no product for you, absolutely nothing, in existence at all. The economic quantity to which you lay claim is absolutely and entirely awanting. And it is certain that you cannot have ownership in a thing which has no existence. The fruits of all tillers are there because they have tilled, not because they own, even though they did own. If the tillers cannot make anything extra for themselves because they own, it is certain nothing extra can be made for non-tillers because they own. So that the non-tillers, in claiming a part, and a large part, of the yearly agricultural products of a country, are claiming the impossible. Every principle in Political Economy unites with one voice in crying, "there is nothing for you." My 100 or 50 acre farm does not yield me a double crop because in the first place I own it and because in the second place I till it. And then, as I have shown you, there is just enough for the tillers and workers, for the year's production goes for the year's eating. To legislate about land rent is therefore to legislate about the impossible. Such, at any rate, is the verdict of Political Economy. And my warning to every legislator who may listen to our discussion is this—that if he legislates land rent into "fixity," he will legislate poverty and crime into "fixity," and before these he must eventually fall. His responsibility to God is indeed very great in attempting to legislate into "fixity" the dangerous doctrines of the Economists as to land rent and land tenure. If I had a thousand tongues I would concentrate them all into a solemn warning against such perilous work. I know that the question is very apt to creep into the mind, based on the system before our eyes, "Are we to give the use of our lands for nothing?" But that, observe, is not the question at all. It is not a question of people cultivating others' land for nothing, but of the nation cultivating its own lands, free of rent constantly drained by people who do not add an iota to the nation's wealth. That is the question. We advocate no such anomaly as people using others' lands for nothing. We claim that the land belongs to the people, and that the people should use their own land. And we take our stand on the great economic truth that industry cannot toil over the creation of all its products and then toil a second time in paying for the use of all its products—that it can no more pay for the use of land, a free gift of God, than for the use of the things made by its own toil. There is the doctrine. It ever confronts us with its rigid and inexorable claims, and you cannot escape from it.

Q. But what of my legal claims?

A. You have no economic claim, and I am sure you will admit that "legal" and economic claims should go hand in hand. If they are divorced, can you expect anything but strife and ill-will? I am sure there is no great genius to be exercised in discovering the secret of Ireland's strife and misery. You can never have a legal claim to that for which you have no economic claim.

Q. Is it certain that the tiller cannot till my land and support both my family and his own?

A. He never can. You lay upon him an economic impossibility.

Q. Can the tiller not make two profits, one for himself and another for me?

A. The Economists sometimes labor to excuse land rent on some such ground, but the idea of double profits for grain, fruits, cattle, etc., is absurd and repugnant to common sense.

Q. Can the tiller not give half his gains, one half profits to himself and one half profits to me?

A. He is a ruined man if he attempts such a thing. Corruption and confusion would overspread the industrial world under such principles at work.

Q. As an economic principle, can there be no such thing as half profits?

A. There can be no such thing.

Q. Nor double profits?

A. No. The very principle of exchange would be destroyed in either case. When I, a shoemaker, exchange my shoes for bread from you, a baker, we each exchange equivalents in labor, and save something to each in the exchange, be-

cause you are apt in your trade as I am apt in mine. That is all. And that is the only profit for the human family which, as an Economist, I can trace. I have read much and thought much about it, and I can find not the slightest trace of anything else which I can bring under the designation of *profit* for the race. A thoughtful man may soon perceive that true economic profit is not in some mighty millionaire filling his coffers with a large portion of the world's metallic money. I have frequently, in other writings, defined profits as "labor saved," and to this day I see no reason to alter or amend my definition.

Q. Alas for my poor lance ! Am I driven to the conclusion that both landlords and tillers are in false positions ?

A. You have hit the right nail on the head. And your lance is shivered, not because it struck me, but because it sought to pierce laws as invulnerable as the everlasting hills. Better throw the fragments away and come to terms.

Q. How are things to be put right ? How are we to have all tillers of the soil owners of the soil ?

A. 'Tis a problem indeed. How it is to be settled is more than I can tell. That it *will* be settled is an absolute certainty, and probably before many years are over. How compensation is ever to be made for all the wrongs and spoliation perpetrated under the system is a thought which may well trouble every mind. *The whole question* must be faced. And our first work is to learn what Political Economy teaches ; for in learning that we are learning what God teaches. In quiet and solitude I have thought out these questions for many years past. We can have no settlement of the problem with strife and discord and evil pass'ons aroused on every hand. It is a work requiring active mental exercise, not violence or strife.

Q. Would you say rent is an immoral tax ?

A. In so far as industry can never pay it without corresponding suffering and ruin, it may not inappropriately be called an immoral tax. But an Economist, as such, has done his duty when he has shown that industry *cannot* pay it. That is enough for the Economist, and it should be enough for the legislator and the Christian.

Q. Can it be on these grounds that usury or interest is utterly forbidden in the Scriptures ?

A. Not a doubt of it, so far as toil itself is concerned.

Q. I presume, then, you have no faith in what is called a "fair rent" ?

A. Economically considered, you might just as well speak of a fair theft. Rent has not even the beginning of fairness to recommend it.

Q. Can there be any compromise, then, of this rent question ?

A. Impossible. The laws of political economy forbid. It must be eradicated, root and branch.

Q. Shall we here close our discussion for the evening, and think over what has been said ?

A. Agreed.

Montreal, 22nd Feb., 1881.

## No. 13.

**NO HALF-TRUTHS ABOUT THE MATTER OF RENT.—IT IS EITHER RIGHT OR WRONG.—AND APPLIES TO THE RESULTS OF HUMAN LABOR AS WELL AS TO GOD'S GIFTS.—A GAME OF SOMETHING FOR NOTHING.—INDUSTRY CANNOT PAY TRIBUTE AND THRIVE—A CEASELESS STRUGGLE AGAINST WHICH THE RACE CAN NEVER MAKE HEADWAY.**

**QUESTION.** Do the economic principles you have set forth in the course of our discussion apply to rent in general, or only to rent of land?

**ANSWER.** To rent in general—rent of lands, of houses, of mills, of factories, of gardens, etc. There are no half truths in Political Economy. Rent is either all right or all wrong. If industry can pay rent for the lands and thrive, it can pay rent for its dwellings and thrive. If it cannot pay rent for the land on which it lives, it cannot pay rent for the dwellings in which it is sheltered. Political Economy has long arms and an inflexible grasp.

Q. Is rent of land the same in principle as rent of dwellings?

A. Just the same.

Q. Does not the fact that rent, when demanded for land, is a tax laid on the free gift of God, but when demanded for a dwelling is a tax on a product of human labor, make a material difference?

A. It makes not the slightest difference. Anything taken out of a house (or rather out of labor) in name of rent, over and above the cost of erecting the house, is the same as rent exacted for the wild land, the free gift of God. If a house, after it has been redeemed and paid for by a sum or sums of money equivalent to the amount spent in erecting it, has the power still left of drawing out of industry an almost unlimited amount in the name of rent, then rent for wild land or any other free gift of God is an economic principle and also legitimate.

Q. Is it not said by the Economists that the landlord supplies the "fixed capital" to the tenant or tiller?

A. The "fixed capital" must refer to the land, God's land, not the creation of the landlord, not in any sense or in the remotest degree the produce of his toil. How can it be said that the human being *supplies* the land? It is absurd.

Q. Do they not also say the buildings, etc., are the "fixed capital"?

A. These are the produce of the tillers, not of the landlords. They have all been supplied from first to last out of the labor of the tillers working on God's free land and in concert with God's free seasons. The tillers erected them or paid for their erection, and they must therefore be the property of the tillers, unless we are determined to set every principle of justice and equity at defiance. If they have been paid for out of rents then they have been paid for by the tillers, and a landlord can give no equivalent in return.

Q. Do not the landlords give the use of the land?

A. Not at all. The usefulness of the land is God's free gift to the men who *use* it or till it. The landlord *gives* nothing. As an active principle, what is the *use* of the land but the labor on the land? To *use* the land is to go upon it and work it. Does the landlord do that? In this respect all the use or using of the land is done by the worker, not a single iota by the landlord. In a word all that can be said of the doings of the landlord is this—that he appropriates the share of God's earth which does not belong to him, and then assumes to dictate to the tillers of the soil how much they shall pay to him for occupying their own lands. That is the case in a nutshell so far as Landlordism is concerned.

Q. Now, is there any concrete or absolute economic truth to be found applicable to what you teach, that rent of land, or money paid for the use of land, can never be paid by the tillers without suffering?

A. There is. It is the principle to which I have already referred, and which I do not think any Economist really ventures to deny—that *use is gratuitous*.

Q. But what does this mean? Please state explicitly the economic truth involved.

A. Broadly stated, the important economic truth embraced in this short sentence is that industry cannot both construct commodities or produce things and pay for the use of the things it produces. Use, or the putting to use, of everything produced by human hands, or in other words the consumption of all the products of industry, is really the enjoyment or the reward of industry for its toil. Industry produces a barrel of flour—it uses or enjoys the barrel of flour. Industry produces a stall-fed ox—it uses or enjoys the meat from the ox. Industry produces a spade—it uses or enjoys the spade. Industry produces a pair of shoes—it enjoys the use of the pair of shoes. Industry produces a garden—it uses or enjoys its garden. Industry produces a house—it uses or enjoys its house. Industry produces all things—it then uses or enjoys all things. But if you have a system by which everything produced by industry is hired back to industry by so-called capitalists, or by which industry is everywhere compelled to pay for the use of the things of its own production, then industry, as I have frequently said on other occasions, instead of being once refreshed is twice oppressed, or *twice cursed* (if we assume labor to be a curse), first, in the labor of making the products, and, second, in the exacted labor of making it pay for the use or consumption of its own products. Here is the great economic law as to the gratuitousness of use, and it is as obvious as the light of day, and can never be overthrown. I stake my case, my reputation, my all, upon its truth. You cannot touch it even skin deep with the sharpest lance you can fabricate. It strikes the death-kneil of all rent and of all interest of money. I repeat, labor makes everything, and must enjoy gratuitously the use or consumption of everything it creates. Use is gratuitous. This is one of the grand truths towards which the industrial world is now reaching forth its hands. The doctrine as a doctrine is now generally admitted by the Economists, but they have not seen the marvellous light it throws around these social questions, and they have given little thought as to where it leads. It is coming in upon us like a flood, and you may as well think to stay the tides of ocean with fair speeches as to arrest its course. We bow devoutly and submissively to God's sentence: Depart to till the ground from whence thou wert taken. We spurn as it deserves the added curse of Landlordism and the Economists: Pay to me and my class all the fruits of your toil above what the barest and most barren lands may yield.

Q. Well, if this law proves that no man who toils, or is a producer, can pay such a thing as rent without suffering, does it not also clearly prove that if he pays rent he gives something for nothing?

A. It clearly does. You cannot escape that conclusion.

Q. If rent is something given for nothing, does this law not also clearly prove that the receiver of rent can make no recompense to the giver of rent?

A. It clearly does. The rent-taker claims to give the use of the land, but the use of the land is gratuitous, and that which is wholly gratuitous can never be sold or become an object of barter. For *use* is gratuitous whether as regards the things made by human hands ordinarily termed *commodities*, or as regards the free gifts of God, such as land, light or air. The improvements on land can be sold, but never the use or utilities of land. Thus you see how and where LABOR steps in with its grand and inexorable demands. My pen has never ceased to tell the countless readers of the journal where our discussion sees the light, that labor only can be sold—the material belongs to God, the *labor* to man.

Q. At a previous interview you set forth this as an economic truth—that *all sums paid under name of rent must go as the purchase money, or as part of the purchase money, of the properties for which the so-called rent is paid*. Would not that doctrine in force make so stupendous a revolution that it would be a new world?

A. Friend, a new world is needed, and will therefore come. A proof that it is coming is that everybody is looking for it and thinking about it; some dreading it, more exulting in it. Even the sots, the mental nobodies, have an undefinable fear.

Nothing that can stand the test of truth will be lost in the turmoil and destruction of that tremendous revolution which is near us, even at the doors. Do not fear for the gold, silver and precious stones—the wood, the hay, the stubble, are not worthy of your regard. Let them meet their inevitable destiny.

Q. At the risk of some recapitulation let us examine this doctrine more closely—let us go deeper to the heart of the subject. There is no use in being afraid to meet a question which is now beginning to agitate society so deeply. Suppose, then, that I build, or rather cause to be built, a house which costs me \$4,000, and that I rent the house at \$400 a year, what is really the true economic position in which I stand as related to that house and rent?

A. Your exact economic position is this: you have, in ten years, drawn in as much money as you paid out for building the house; and the false economic position is this, that yet you own both the money and the house.

Q. What is the economic position of the rent payer?

A. He has taken care of the house, put all repairs on it, has paid all taxes, and has paid the cost of erecting the house; and his false economic position is, that he owns neither house nor money.

Q. Is that right?

A. It is all wrong.

Q. Is every \$400 paid in name of rent actually part payment of the cost of building the house?

A. It is. It cannot possibly be anything else. Custom calls it rent. Political economy calls it purchase money.

Q. But the \$4,000 in name of rent are paid in instalments extending over ten years

A. Payments deferred or payments anticipated cannot alter the value or cost of the house, or the value of the total sum paid by the tenant for the house or in name of rent.

Q. Have you any economic truth which justifies or embraces that statement?

A. I have. The labor of the human race to-day is equivalent to the labor of the race to-morrow, of this week to next week, of this month to next month, of this year to next year—my working for you to-day or this week is balanced by your working for me to-morrow or next week. That is to say, human labor is not enhanced in value simply because a portion of time intervenes between doing this work and that work.

Q. Is it the case, then, that the first \$400 paid transfers to the payer \$400 worth of value in that house?

A. It must do so if use be gratuitous. The first quarter's payment, say \$100, transfers to you \$100 worth of value in that house. If your payments were monthly or daily, your ownership would be monthly or daily.

Q. And the second year's payment, \$800 worth of value in it, and so on to the end?

A. It must.

Q. Then are you not laying it down as an economic doctrine that men may enjoy the one year's use of a house or 3 months' use for nothing at all?

A. Pardon me. I am laying down no such doctrine. I have always laid down the doctrine that men should give value for value, labor for labor, toil for toil—that if a house is worth \$4,000 that sum should be paid for it on the spot. Suspension of true exchange, brought so extensively into all our social relations by the credit system, is full of evil to industry. But it will not alter inexorable laws.

Q. But, practically, your doctrine as to rent leads to what I say?

A. Because, practically, your doctrine as to rent has dishonored the toiling populations of the world; reduced them to beggary; compelled them to toil in heat and cold in erecting all dwellings, and yet left them without dwellings—thrown them into the position of being compelled to pay rent or choose to encamp in the streets or roadsides. In some cities certain men own nearly three thousand houses each. The Editor of the *Irish World* showed us the other day that it was proposed to increase rents ten per cent. in New York, and that in the case of one man in that

city, it was equivalent to an addition of 260 houses by a mere stroke of the pen. That, added to the ten per cent. of ordinary rental, is equal to an increase in one year of 520 houses. How do you like the prospect? How do you like the practical working out of your doctrine?

Q. Still, may rent not be all right?

A. No, the thing is impossible, because this terrible and homeless state to which you bring the world's toilers does not introduce, or alter, or amend any law in Political Economy, but it does entrench on the great economic law that use is gratuitous, and that the men who, by the labor of their hands, construct the dwellings, must enjoy the free use and shelter of the dwellings. If the toilers who construct the dwellings got the full equivalent of their toil in such construction, every toiler would own a good and comfortable dwelling. But here we have the few owning the dwellings, and the great multitude owning no dwellings. All of which shews that the laws of our political economy are suffering systematic violation. Your rent doctrine, instead of strengthening industry and adding to its resources, disarms industry and reduces it to beggary.

Q. A great proportion of the world's toil is paid for at the end of the month—the men receive their wages *after* they have given a completed month's labor—on the same principle ought not the poorer classes who pay rents by the month to have that month's payment counted as part of the purchase money of the dwelling?

A. An admirable question and thoroughly to the point. The principle is exactly the same. The poor person, if he had the month's payment thus credited to him, would not be getting a cent more, or any more favor than the capitalist who enjoys a month's labor of his men without payment. They are equivalent cases.

Q. Does not the impossibility of a pauperized population to construct or pay for the construction of, the dwellings, introduce rent upon the scene?

A. It does not in principle. It brings no principle of rent into the field of Political Economy. Rent is a lash laid on the back of labor, but it is no principle in economic science.

Q. Where does my second house really come from in the course, say, of 8 or 10 years? Out of what fund is it paid for? From whose labor is it taken?

A. If you have, say, 10 houses now, and if your rental makes you owner of 20 houses in eight or ten years, you manage it by stripping the rent payers of all their resources, taking from them what should go to form homes of their own or be laid aside for support of their families. There is not a householder or shop-keeper who will gainsay this truth. They all know it, for they all writhe under it. To pay rent is a weary, ceaseless struggle, against which the human race can never make headway. It is a curse, and nothing but a curse. Does not every shopkeeper constantly cry out, "we could live well were it not for the rents"? Pity it were not more rare to find shopkeepers upholding the system which is ruining them. For has not the statistics of the commercial agencies made us aware of the fact that, on an average, the entire commercial world is destroyed every fifteen or twenty years, literally swept away, surely one of the most appalling facts that humanity can contemplate. Universal bankruptcy every twenty years! Think if it. Thus this modern commercial communistic system works out RUIN to all.

Q. Is it not an economic principle that houses and other property should increase in this geometrical progression, 2 houses in 10 years, 4 houses in 20 years 8 houses in 30 years, 16 houses in 40 years, 32 houses in 50 years, and so on in the same ratio?

A. There is no such economic principle. Labor gives birth to all houses and to all property. Houses don't increase. Money doesn't increase. And labor does not double itself or double its property every ten years. If it did so it would drown itself in riches, it would be destroyed by its own accumulations. Labor slowly but gradually gathers the necessary comforts of life around it. But the year's food is for the year's consumption, the year's labor for the year's supply. The rent principle, therefore, applied to houses, lands, money, every product of industry, inevitably issues in the disinheriting of the people of their lands and of

the dishoming of the millions from their dwellings. The producers of the world's wealth inhabit *houses* but own no *homes*. The people of England have no interest in their lands, and homes of their own they have none. Such is rent, and such must ever be the fruit of rent. That fruit is before you wherever you turn.

Q. Is it the case, then, that every house, every building that has stood say about ten years, and been rented, has been paid for?

A. There is no escaping that conclusion. Labor, ~~though~~ it has done it by instalments, has just invested an equivalent value in the building. It is, all through, a question of human labor.

Q. Suppose that the \$4,000, the cost of the house, had been paid all cash down, could the owner not have employed that money remuneratively, and is he not debarred from this employment by getting it in instalments?

A. Even if he could so "employ" money, it would not alter the case as regards the burden on the rent-payer. But he could not so "employ" money. For money is absolutely unproductive. He could only exchange the value wrapped up in the \$4,000 for some other value wrapped up in another \$4,000 or what represented \$4,000. And use is gratuitous. These economic truths hedge us up with a logic out of which there is no escape. If the buyer pays \$4,000 down he gets ownership and possession at once—if he pays it in instalments spread over 10 years (call it by any name you like) it has taken him 10 years to obtain full ownership. If, at the end of 10 years, he has given away \$4,000 in money, and has no home, he has virtually built a second house for the landlord for nothing, and also looked after, and cared for and kept in repair, the first house. But the position of every rent payer is an unnatural position. He or his family may have really paid for the house they occupy twice over, and yet not own a stone in it; for every dollar paid in name of this so-called rent is a dollar's worth of the labor of that family invested in the house. Or they may be in occupation of a house which, if paying rent, they are only purchasing by slow degrees. And it is unnatural, further, in this respect, that God designed all men should occupy their own habitations, and yet they are dishomed; that labor is amply able to furnish every one with a home or dwelling, and yet labor seems unable to accomplish this its first and principal duty. Of course our present entire economic system in its wide and varied corruptions, is at fault, and contributes to such a condition of things.

Q. But has not the man and his family received shelter for 10 years?

A. Yes.

Q. Has not the landlord given him the shelter?

A. No—the house has given him the shelter. God's material products, stone, lime, timber, slates, glass, &c., all put in position by the hand of toil, have sheltered the family. Industry can give back the \$4,000—it can't give a cent more. It is, so far, a question of human ability. *Industry cannot pay rent and thrive.* The end and design of all economic laws is to show that the tiller is to own the farm he tills and the occupier the house he inhabits.

Q. If this doctrine be true, then, are not all rent payers, all rent producers, deeply interested in the problem?

A. They are. But probably you will find that thousands of rent payers will oppose the doctrine. Rent can never yield an equivalent—it is an economic impossibility. *It is absolutely true that every man who has paid rent equivalent in amount to the cost of the property, owns the property.* But people have been educated to believe the reverse of this, to believe in what is not true. So we must not be surprised if the truth has to slowly force its way.

Q. We have indeed discussed problems of stupendous importance. Shall we think over them till next meeting?

A. Let us do so. You are right as to the importance of the discussion this evening. It is a new field of thought. What stupendous issues if these doctrines be true! You may be sure they have given me many an anxious thought and long and patient investigation. Pray let us think well over them.

## No. 14.

**HUMAN LABOR THE GREAT PRODUCER.—THE RIGHT SORT OF “FIXITY”.—NOT THAT OF LANDLORDISM, BUT THAT OF FREEHOLDS AND FREEHOLDERS.—LANDLORDS PAY NO BILLS—LABOR PAYS ALL.—TAXATION A MODERN CURSE.—DIVISION OF LANDS AND INDUSTRY.—COMMERCIAL EQUALITY, NOT ASCENDANCY, REAL PROSPERITY.—NO STATUTE OF LIMITATION FOR ROBBERY.—IF JUST TO TAKE THE PEOPLE'S LANDS A THOUSAND YEARS AGO, IT IS JUST THAT THE PEOPLE RETAKE THEM NOW.—NORWAY'S FREE-HOLDERS VERSUS IRELAND'S SERFS.**

Q. What is it that determines the value of the cereals and other food products?

A. Professor Fawcett and the Economists generally say their value is determined by the supply of and demand for these cereals.

Q. Is it so?

A. No. Their commercial value is determined by the amount of human labor embodied in these food products; or, in other words, the value that is in them is constituted of the labor that is in them.

Q. Do you there state a general law, or only a special law relating to food?

A. A general law. It has reference to every product of human toil.

Q. Do you believe in the doctrine of Mill and the economists, that accumulations are the fruits of abstinence?

A. I do not. It is absurd. How can refusing to consume products accumulate them? You might as well say that promising to eat your dinner is the eating of it, or that promising to pay for your purchase is the paying of it. Accumulation is the fruit of toil, not of abstinence. If the doctrine of Mill were true, then, when I have by my year's toil accumulated everything into my barn and locked up the doors, I would, on returning next morning find 10, 50, or 100 bushels of grain added to my stock. Or, if I left 100 bars of iron stacked in my shed on 1st January, I would find 110 or 120 bars there on 31st December!

Q. Then why do all the Economists insist so much on so transparent absurdity?

A. Men's minds are thereby turned away from human labor as the great source of production. The merit of production is actually taken out of the hand of the toiler and conferred on the miser. What a fraud is this English Political Economy! What abject slavery to men's minds!

Q. Do you think that a nation which becomes, like England, to a large extent simply a nation of artisans, thereby places itself in a perilous condition?

A. That is an interesting and suggestive question, and much might be said on it. I think such a nation is not in a safe or prosperous condition. A purely manufacturing nation hangs its existence too much on the brittle thread of competition. There is a division of labor which is healthy, and also one which is unhealthy. If England cannot undersell her competitors, and continue to undersell, she will be ruined. And we all know how closely the manufacturer on the Continent is treading on the heels of the English manufacturer, and in some lines of goods leaving him behind. Neither is it good or safe that a nation should be confined, as Ireland now is, almost exclusively to agriculture. The true prosperity of nations does not lie so much in commercial ascendancy as in commercial equality, for from decaying nations true equivalents cannot be received. So that the prosperity of your customer is your prosperity; the decay of your customer is your decay. What an interlocking and interdependence of human interests! Great and important truths, if people would but reflect on them.

Q. Should the manufactures be transplanted, in a more equal ratio, to the seats of grain production?

A. I think they should. The simple loss of effective force, the throwing away, as it were, of human labor needlessly in transporting millions of bushels of grain and other products, must be enormous. For all that loss and waste the millions of toilers must pay, for the bulk of the great food staples are consumed by the many, not, like luxuries, by the few. Not that I mean to say, however, that it is not human toil which produces luxuries as well as necessities.

Q. Can you tax landlords?

A. The thing is impossible. I have in various writings pointed out the impossibility. You may as well try to tax the moon. You cannot tax a farm, nor an estate, nor wild lands, nor a factory, nor a dwelling, nor a bale of goods. You can tax nothing but labor in the person of the laborer. The laborer pays all taxes. How can you tax an idler, a man who produces *nothing*? Taxes may pass through many hands ere they reach the public treasury, but they all *flow out of toil*. Even if you tax what is known as a luxury, you do not tax the wealthy man who buys and consumes the luxury—you tax the toilers who produce the luxury, even though that luxury should find its way to an Englishman's stomach from the ends of the earth. The landowner of England, as a landowner, can never be made to bear any part of the taxation of England. You cannot do economic impossibilities. Were the taxation of England concentrated on the agricultural labor of the country, and were the legislature at a stroke to dissolve all these taxes, the entire amount, to the last cent, would be at once added to the rent-roll of the landlords. What toil *now* pays, toil would still pay *then*. Under the present system, whatever is paid in taxes is drained out of toil. And under the same system, if you threw off all taxes together, these taxes would never revert to the pockets of the toilers but would be drained into the pockets of Capital. Usury would then appropriate what is now swallowed by taxation. That the industrial world will ere long overthrow its three giant oppressors, usury, taxation and rent, is just as certain as that the sun will rise to-morrow. It is one of the *inevitable* events not far away. I regret to see so many labor reformers continually talking so lovingly of this thing *taxation*. They pay court alternately to rent, government, taxation, as if they could there find any comfort or light. No wonder if, amidst the confusion worse confounded, they should, like Milton's angelic peers, sometimes altogether lose their heads. They fail to see, what they ought long since to have seen, that taxation, so far as afflicted labor is concerned, is the destroying weapon, the slaughter weapon, in the hands of its oppressors—in a word, a terrible, a withering, and a merciless power; a vast police armed to the teeth, drilled and trained, and the result of whose exactions is to crush and destroy the industry of every land. It is one of the great *CURSES* of our modern age. Awake! awake! thinking men, *to a true sense of what this thing really is*.

Q. I presume you are not a believer in "fixity of tenure"?

A. O, indeed I am. I believe in the true thing, in fixity in the right way and in the right place; in all good things in all good places; in the Bible way and in the way of political economy. I don't believe in "fixing" curses upon a people—I will do all I can in "fixing" blessings. I don't believe in fixing rents, but I do believe in fixing freeholds and freeholders. I believe that every man should be permitted to own and cultivate his share of God's earth, his own farm, and cultivate it by his own hands and the hands of his family, and not by hired labor, which is but another form of landlordism. I believe in the sentiment uttered long ago by Lord Bacon as a warning to the legislators of England: "Keep the plough in the hands of the owners and not in the hands of hirelings." I believe that the peer, in putting his hand to the plough, would be doing a far more stately and dignified thing than sitting up o' nights when decent people should be abed, to pass Coercion Bills breathing out all manner of violence and destruction against all who think differently from himself—for I suppose everybody outside of landlordism and toadyism knows exactly the merit and the meaning of a Coercion Bill.

I believe it would be infinitely better for the peer to lay his hands on money earned by his own toil at the plough than on tens of thousands drained out of others' toil through rent. Yea, I believe further, that nobody, peer or peasant, can ever do more stately or dignified work than to put his hand to the plough, and so bring health, happiness and abundance to himself and fellows. "Fixity of tenure," as proposed and discussed in the English journals, is but a poor sop to the requirements of the case. It is an attempt to train the people of England to think of, and to accept of, habits of bondage as part and parcel of the nation's framework and economy. First prove your right of possession and your right to land rent, and then talk of fixity of tenure. Let us all go in for "fixing" the rights and liberties of the people, and let every true man pledge himself to go in for "unfixing" everything that tends to corrupt the national life. The present "fixings" are all wrong, so we must unfix the whole that the whole may be fixed aright. The relative position of thought and action makes all the difference between a fool and a wise man. Thought first, action afterwards. Think out the problems, then move. You have no reason to expect to be listened to until you have proved your claims to be right.

Q. Would it be for the safety of every nation to apply those principles of political economy you have advanced in the course of our discussion?

A. A nation can only find its security in *applied political economy*, not in a bastard economy, but in a true economy. Any nation which persistently refuses to apply the teachings of political economy, or whose legislation is diametrically opposed to these teachings, is but preparing its own destruction. There is nothing for that nation but revolution or destruction.

Q. If a landlord rents out 100 farms to as many farmers, and draws in as rent, say, £50,000 a year (and there are rent-rolls much larger in amount than that) is it as if 100 men supported one man by their toil?

A. No. It is as if 100 toilers supported 100 landlords by their toil. If the landlord had only one farm to rent it would be one toiler supporting a non-toiler. Each farm being a distinct and separate means of livelihood for one family, it cannot fail to be as if each farmer supported a landlord and his family, although the entire rents of the 100 farms should concentrate into the one pocket. But if the average yearly toil of all workers or producers in the nation is represented by £100, it is, in the case you suppose, as if 100 men supported 500. If the average be say £50 a year (which is about the truth in England) it is as if 100 men supported a thousand, for 50 times £1000 make £50,000, the amount of the rental of the 100 farms. In Ireland the average money return yearly to each agricultural laborer is reckoned to be about \$130, say £27, and consequently it is, as related to the present condition of that country, as if 100 men supported 1,850 non-toilers. But yet we must not lose sight of the fact that it is really *one man* who is drawing in £50,000 a year, or, according to the English Economists, who is reducing the entire labor on these 100 farms to the position of those who till the barren and profitless lands. This shows what an enormous drainage of the resources of a nation is the rent-roll of a great landlord. These figures don't lie. They speak with eloquent tongues to the people of Ireland, of England, of Scotland. Abolish this terrible system of oppression, and it is plain to a demonstration that from a money point of view alone (and assuming that the lands of Ireland were so held that each landlord drew a rental of £50,000) each tiller in Ireland would be 18½ times better off than he is now. But who may measure, in mere figures, the gulf which separates beggary from abundance, want and starvation from comfort and plenty, the empire of industry in ruins from the same empire established in its glory, its bounty, and its strength? Figures and arithmetical calculations are not the things to use when the happiness and the life and the morality of nations are concerned.

Q. Does all that you have said apply to tenants?

A. To tenants as tillers or workers, *but not otherwise*. Short of tillers and toilers I dare not stop. To attempt to gather economic material from any other source is to search for what cannot be found.

Q. If it were right, economically, morally or otherwise, that men should *keep* possession of lands taken by force from their owners ten, fifty, a hundred, five hundred years ago, would it not be right that men now *take* possession by force of others' lands any day and any hour of any day?

A. It would be so. A man who justified the *keeping* must, to be consistent, also justify the *taking*. For you have to *take* in order that you may *keep*. It would be exactly the same principle at work. Time condones many things—the loss of national lands, with the disinherited race still living (or dying) on these lands, time never can condone. The right to *keep* possession would stand on exactly the same footing as the right to *take* possession. And you can apply no statutes of limitation to political economy. The lands of a nation, taken by a few men by force from the people a thousand years ago, will ruin that nation as thoroughly today as if these lands had been taken only yesterday. And it will not arrest that ruin though these lands should all have been sold and resold ten thousand times. And so the men who approve the keeping of these lands approve the ruin of that nation. The man who holds to such views is guilty of his country's death. For the nation is not dead—it is there alive to this day, waiting for its lands and claiming its long-lost inheritance. The nation has never disinherited itself and could not do so, even if it wished, for a nation cannot commit treason against itself.

Q. Does not all this open up a dangerous and fatal line of inquiry?

A. It does, to such as fear or have reason to fear the inquiry and to those alone. But why should men ever dread inquiry into economic problems? Almost every question you have addressed to me goes to raise a practical problem as well as to establish an economic theory. Keep that in mind I pray you.

Q. After all said and done, may it not be alleged that everything now is simply a matter of contract between man and man—that society has gradually moved from the position of status to the position of contract?

A. All very good if you (or society) can "contract" yourself outside of the laws of Political Economy. That you cannot do. The nation which attempts it will legislate itself to ruin. True applied Politics! Economy will never accompany a false rural economy or a false husbandry.

Q. Is it a sad history this of the retrograde movement as to English rural husbandry and English land tenure?

A. It is indeed a sad history. When the future historian comes to lay his hands on the materials for his narrative of the gradual destruction of the freeholders and yeomanry of England and the absorption of their lands, he will find himself in contact with about as degrading and despicable a piece of business as the world has ever witnessed.

By the "Enclosures Acts," passed between 1710 and 1843, 7½ millions of acres of "common" lands, one-third of the cultivated area of England, have been taken by the lords of the manor for their own use; and we have the authority of an eminent economist, Emile de Lavaleye, for saying that "this immense territory was taken from the enjoyment of the cultivators almost without indemnity." However, as our discussion has been rather to investigate the *economic* features of the question, we need not further pursue this line of inquiry. The entire history of land tenure through all the ages, and as connected with every form of national life and progress, is one of deepest interest to every thoughtful man. It may be a hard thing to say, but it seems to me that, *after the light has spread around it and its people know the truth on these questions*, a nation which still permits itself to be disinherited and dishonored will deserve its fate. Since we began our discussion I deeply regret to say that the name of the Governor-General of this Dominion has been attached to the bill giving away 25,000,000 acres of the people's lands to one Corporation. The question now before the people of Canada is: *Are these lands really given away?* If a handful of men can thus give away the people's lands, may they not give away an entire continent? Would it be a worse crime for them to give away every house in Montreal to new-comers for nothing than to give away 25 millions of acres of wild lands which God has

created and furnished with all fertile powers free for the sustenance of his toiling children? Is not an inroad made on the "rights of property" just as much in the one case as in the other? Is it a less crime to make an inroad on the labor of God's hand than on the labor of man's hand; to subvert the designs of the great Creator than to subvert the labor of human hands? The wild lands are no more the property of these men to give away than are the houses in any city or town in the Dominion. To hand over to speculators the wild lands reserved for the poor tillers is just as serious a crime as to oust men from their dwellings and hand them over to speculating knaves, to be resold to the real owners. For those who do such deeds to prize of the rights of property is to add infamy to infamy.

Q. Is it not iniquitous for a few people, occupying their few years and then passing away, thus to ruin and destroy the prospects of future generations, to hand over for all time to come immense territories to a single landlord or corporation with all that moves and breathes and springs from these vast territories?

A. It is iniquity indeed, a public crime of which those who give and those who receive are equally guilty. It looks as if landlordism were to be introduced to this continent on a scale which will throw the landlordism of Europe into the shade. The process is at work which, if left to itself, will at no distant date degrade to the worst serfdom the free citizenship of America.

Q. Still, permit me to inquire if you can present any evidence, constant and continuous, of the advantage of the division of lands in the hands of the cultivators?

A. Cases without number might be given. Take Norway for example. There, as a rule, the lands are owned by the tillers. There is usually no land tenure, strictly so called. They boast of holding their lands by the same right as the king holds his crown. A landlord is all but unknown. The owners of course pay no rents or feu dues, and acknowledge no Superior. The possession is what is called Allodial, the *udal* "tenure" of the ancient Scandinavians, from two words, *all* and *odh*, signifying all property. It formerly existed in England, but was destroyed by William I. when he introduced feudal tenure. The farmers all till their own lands. The owners are the tillers, and the tillers are the owners. And although this system has prevailed from time immemorial it is most interesting to observe that it has not resulted, as one might fear, in too great subdivision of the farms, the instinct of self-preservation being apparently powerful enough as a corrective of any such tendencies. The few small estates owned by what we understand by the term "landlord" appear to be so insignificant as not to deserve notice. The consequence of all this is that the rural population of Norway have every comfort, are well fed, well clothed, and well housed, and enjoy every necessary and luxury which the country commands. The agricultural class, says Mr. Laing, "are the kernel of the nation and fine athletic men, as their properties are not so large as to exempt them from work, but large enough to afford them and their households abundance, and even a superfluity, of the best food." Practically the same idea advanced by Montesquieu when he says (*Esprit des Lois*, V. 5): "It is not sufficient, in a good democracy, that the portions of the soil should be equal; they must also be small, as at Rome." A Norwegian writer (Mr. B. Bjornson) said the other day in one of our American magazines: "Norway's free peasantry was pronounced a qualification for self-government which no other European country could show." Have not the people of Ireland the same right to all these favorable conditions as the people of Norway? If we can discover no argument that they have not such rights, let us not be guilty of the wickedness of finding an excuse to rob them under cover of a silly sneer at some national peculiarity.

Q. Have lands, since the days of Moses, ever been divided by lot?

A. Our common expression, "a lot of land," evidently comes down from Moses. The division and the re-distribution of lands by lot is noticed by all historians in many countries up to comparatively recent times. The ancient Breton laws of Ireland embody the principles of the land tenure of Moses where they say,

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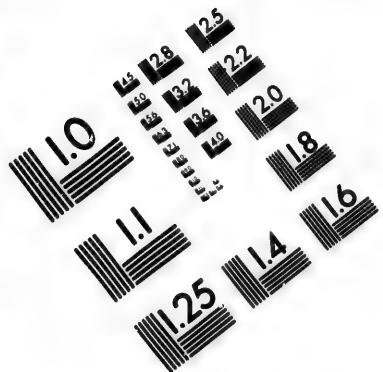
“Every one shall preserve his land intact, neither selling it, burdening it with debts, nor giving it in satisfaction of crimes or contracts.” There are traditions of a period known in remote antiquity as the Golden Age, and celebrated by ancient classic poets, when the lands were the common property of all, and all had equal share in the plenty produced from mother earth. No doubt the reference is to the village communities which have so long and so extensively prevailed. “Plato also speaks of the equality of the primitive partition of the land, and he expresses the idea, common to all the politics of antiquity, that equality of conditions is the indispensable foundation of purity of morals, of virtue, and of liberty.”—LAVELEYE, Primitive Property, x, 143.

Q. Was no protest made in England against the process of disinheritance so persistently carried on in that country?

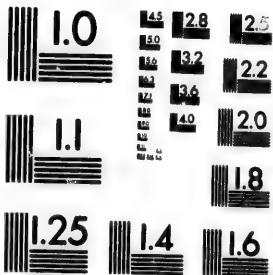
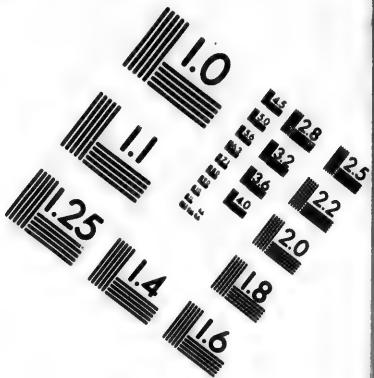
A. Many protests were made. Kings occasionally tried all their strength against it. Acts of Parliament were especially framed to arrest it. Bishops sent in petitions denouncing it. Latimer, with a boldness and independence which shames the meek churchman of these days, preached against it in presence of the Court, and denounced the greedy nobles to their face, warning them that they were transforming the staunch yeomanry of England into a race of dispossessed slaves. But all was of no avail. Disinheritance was accomplished, and the English Land System now stands forth before the gaze of all nations as the most thoroughly organized system of despotism which has ever crushed the liberties of the world and drained the resources of the race. It is of deep interest to note that this idea of landlordship gives birth to those other ideas which impel a landlord parliament constantly to grasp the sword to destroy all that bars its path. If an English Government, made up principally of landlords, is determined to continue to play the madman in the world, I see nothing for it but that free governments must combine to tie up the madman's hands. It seems as if, in the providence of God, the unhappy sister, Ireland, had been located where she is just to shew to the world how far human malevolence can go, and to what utter degradation humanity may be brought when subjected to irresponsible power. And a few mortals like ourselves, dressed in a little brief authority, and who will in a few brief years be standing before the Judge of all the earth, these few men, closing their eyes to the light, and shutting their ears to the warnings that every breeze is wafting to them from this great and free continent, are at this moment saying to that suffering sister : Lay down your neck till we place our iron heel upon it, and then, *but not till then*, we may perhaps grant you a relaxation in your bondage. Deeply mistaken am I if there are not millions of true-hearted Englishmen who will cry : Enough! hands off ! let our sister arise ; fair play to all ; let not the gist disgrace the giver ; our English race has a nobler mission than to show how far ordinary brutality can go in the provocation to deeds of violence ; in God's name, let not our common humanity be put to further shame ; if Ireland is to share bed and board with us only at the cost of gagging her members of Parliament, evicting her helpless tillers from their homes, and dragooning her own people on her own soil, then let Ireland rise and go.

Q. Do you think this great Land movement is going to succeed?

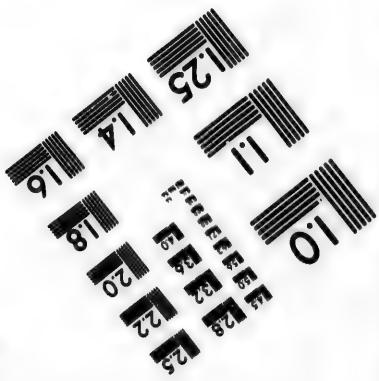
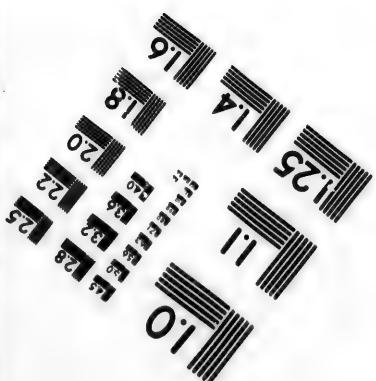
A. One reason, apart from the economies of the question, which leads me to believe that it is going to succeed is, that it has all through been emphatically a People's movement, from which ordinary loud-mouthed philanthropy has stood aloof, and against which the champion liars of the age have in vain fabricated their slanders. Thus it has not been overlaid in its cradle and its teething time is past. Men in humble ranks of life have taken hold of it ; they have stood on the platform ; they have written in the press ; they have contributed of their means. The people have been moved as they have never been moved before. They have craved for knowledge and information, and knowledge and light have been granted to them. And with that light has come A POWER which places their cause beyond peradventure. For no true liberty can ever come to the people so long as the gross darkness covers them. With regard to this great movement, it



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may be truly said, in the language of Scripture, that a nation has been born in a day. You may as well try to arrest the tides of ocean as arrest this great wave of human thought which is now flowing over all lands. What is to be done with the soil on which we tread and from which we draw our life is already a settled question. Humanity has put its hand to that plough never to be withdrawn. Let a true economic literature be sown broadcast over Great Britain and Ireland and over every land. I have not discussed these problems with you simply because they are Irish questions. They are questions for all the race. And in the deep longings of my soul I hope and pray that the sunburst on Ireland's banner may prove the herald not only of what is about to dawn for Ireland but for every land beneath the sun.

Q. I observe that you make very little reference to what is understood as the political bearings of the land question—how is this?

A. Is it worth wasting a breath upon? Would we get an inch nearer the goal were we to talk or write till doomsday about the "politics" of the question? It is an economic subject, and as such must be thought out and settled.

Q. Shall we enter on the subject of capital as applied to the soil? It seems as if our discussion were incomplete if we leave it out.

A. The discussion is incomplete till that is considered. We must, without fear, brace ourselves for every challenge sent forth by this grand science of Political Economy. I would prefer, however, to place in the hands of the Editor of the *Irish World* a special paper which I have prepared on the important topic, and in which it will be my turn to put questions to you and to all who may read it. I have prepared it with all the care I can command. I have brought to bear upon its preparation the careful research and patient study of many years. The paper will be almost entirely a series of questions, deeply suggestive as to these great problems, and the answer and solution I propose to leave with the reader himself. And I am sure it will prove no small reward to me if I can succeed in drawing the minds of thoughtful men into new avenues of thought and into hopeful sources of investigation on questions of such stupendous interest as those related to human labor and its just rewards, even though the course of thought and inquiry should appear as if it circumscribed the emoluments of the few whilst opening up legitimate resources to disinherited millions. It is *true* men I desire to address, and true men are ever lovers of truth. For the present let me entertain the hope that our discussion, so far as it has gone, and so far as it has dealt with masterful problems, will help to broaden all manly sympathies within us, and lead us to see that there is something lying deeper at the roots of human progress and happiness than can be found in acts of Parliament, in the maxims and literature of modern business, in the cheap clap-trap of the platform, or in the swirl and excitement of "modern life."

" Think truly, and thy thought  
Shall some soul's famine feed;  
Speak truly, and each word of thine  
Shall be a fruitful seed;  
Live truly, and thy life shall be  
A grand and noble creed."

Montreal, 8th March, 1871.

## No. 15.

THE LAND CATECHISM DRAWING TO A CONCLUSION.—CAPITAL—  
WHAT IS IT?—A JURY EMANELLED.—COMMON-SENSE QUESTIONS FOR MENTAL POWER EXERTION,—AN ARGUMENT FROM A SPADE.—DO THE WORKERS DEPEND FOR A LIVING ON THE NON-WORKERS, OR THE NON-WORKERS ON THE WORKERS?—NATURE'S LAWS AND THE ARBITRARY LAWS OF MEN.

I now fulfil my promise to lay before the reader a paper containing a series of questions on the subject of Capital. I have so constructed it that every reader, if he thinks on the subject at all, must come to debate each question in his own mind, and form his own conclusions. I ask that every word may be carefully weighed and pondered, and nothing taken on trust. That great and important truths—in fact,

## A NEW ECONOMY,

are foreshadowed in the present paper, and that there is much in it deeply suggestive of further thought, there is no need to conceal. I have endeavored, however, so to construct and arrange the whole that the man of simplest understanding may find each question fall, almost without mental effort, within the range of his comprehension. And yet I am deeply sensible that I only break ground as it were. To formulate the whole into exact and scientific order must be the work of the future, and in all likelihood of some other hand than mine. The illustrations may be simple and of the homeliest, but the great problems we are discussing may not suffer in the least on that account. Rather it appears to me that the most direct road towards the truths we are all in search of is through the free use of just such homely and familiar illustrations, when these illustrations are to the point. For I suppose there is not a reader of the *Irish World* who needs to be told with what facility a long and learned disquisition on Capital may be written, and the whole thing, nevertheless, prove as barren as the sand by the sea shore. Unless we get hold of the plain and simple bottom truths of Political Economy, writer and reader will tire themselves out by a fruitless dance, and find themselves in the end, jaded and wearied, just where they began. If you want to get lost in the wood just take up with a few current economic errors at the beginning of your investigations, such as you will find in plenty at every street corner, and you will see how soon your wishes will be fulfilled, a condition which may not be altogether hopeless if you really *know* that you *have* got lost. But if, making sure of one truth at a time, we plant our feet firmly there; and then, reaching forth, grasp the next outlying truth, and find it answering to all that the first demands whilst presenting new and interesting relations to other truths; then are we sustained and encouraged in our onward progress, and at the same time saved from those wild and reckless speculations which have strewn the fair field of Political Economy thick with errors which are to this day the standing disgrace of our modern thought and intellect.

Most earnestly do I entreat the reader, and especially my working friends, to take up the following sentences one by one—to read them over, not once or twice, but many times—to give them, as occasion serves, silent and solitary thought, and also to talk of them with their families at the meals and at the fire-side—to discuss them with their friends at the clubs and meetings, and to debate them at every favorable opportunity. When the great truths wrapped up in these questions have become as familiar to you as the tools you hold in your hands, *then the labor cause is won.*

Let us endeavor, then, to see what title this courtly term "capital" has to the innumerable good things which are claimed on its behalf. I must ask it for once to step forward to the bar. If its broadcloth is fairly and honorably won, we shall accord to it all the honor it deserves. In any case I shall hardly utter a word of accusation or condemnation. I shall simply lay before the gentlemen of the jury sundry economic questions for their consideration. It rests with them to give in the verdict. If the jury disagree it must go to further trial. For with regard to this case, one or other of the verdicts, guilty or not guilty, must eventually be found. When I think of the great multitude who will constitute this jury, and who will all, before the next month is out, have read every word I have to say, it behoves me to do my best, to feel humbly thankful for so great an opportunity, to ask the help of him without whom we can do nothing, and to seek his blessing on whatever of truth may be found in an inquiry so momentous.

Without further ado, then, let us begin.

I set to work and construct one of the commonest tools of industry, a spade. I use that spade for a season in digging my ground. At the close of the season my spade will have lost about half an inch of its steel facing. In three or four years, especially if used in sharp soil, the spade will be about useless for further labor. At the first spadeful the implement was of the value of \$1.25 ; at the end of the year it was worth \$1 ; at the end of the second year its value will decrease to 75 cents ; at the end of the third year to 50 cents ; and at the end of the fourth year it becomes, say, of no further use and is thrown aside.

Let us confine ourselves to the first year's work.

All the things produced by my toil, aided by the spade in my hand, constitute the rewards or the returns of my labor. Natural forces outside of my toil have aided me in my work—the land itself is there with all its fertile properties ; air, rain, dew, sunshine, seasons, have all done their part ; but the product, so far as labor has been exerted upon it, is labor's property, and is rightly and appropriately called the returns of my toil ; and in selling that product it is virtually the labor that I sell, and no more—not the properties of the soil, not the air, the sunshine, or the rain ; not the labors of the dead past, but the living active energies of my own arm, aided by my own brain. The labor appliances and improvements left me by my forefathers or predecessors shall aid me in my toil, but must not be made the instruments of reducing the toil of others one cent. There is my labor, and there are the returns for that labor, the whole translated into value, and ready to be exchanged, if need be, into other and equivalent value.

The great doctrines I desire to bring before the reader are embraced more or less in the following questions ; and, as I have said, I leave the questions in the hands of the reader, my design being to arouse thought and interest in truly great and noble themes.

When I consume the year's produce, can I make anybody pay me, or recompense me, for the deterioration of value in the spade, for the wear and tear, for the loss of the half inch of steel facing ?

When I sell the year's produce, can I claim from the buyer, or from anybody else, a recompense for the half inch of steel facing ? Can I add something to the value of all that I sell in order to replace the lost steel ? Or can I deduct something from everything that I buy from others to replace the worn steel ?

In other words, when I sell my produce, can I claim not only a return for the same, for the labor embodied, an equivalent value, an equivalent amount of human toil, but also claim that my worn spade shall be replaced from some quarter or other, outside of my own toil, with a new spade, or with money enough to buy a new spade ?

Don't be too hasty now with a reply. Think well over it. Turn the matter carefully over in your mind before you come to a conclusion. For this involves a bottom truth though presented to you in a homely way, and upon your answer to this first question will depend pretty much whether you and political economy are to become better acquainted, or whether you are to make progress, to your own satisfaction, in solving these great labor problems.

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If, on consuming the produce in my own family, I cannot claim that some other tiller shall put a new spade in my hands or make good the lost half inch of steel facing, can I, if I *sell* the produce instead of consuming it, make somebody pay for, or replace, the lost facing from the spade? Should the act of selling make any difference as compared with the act of consumption?

In other words, can I both *use* my spade (my capital) and *have* my spade (my capital) intact?

For, if I can make such a claim, is not this the result—that I would be ever using (my capital) my spade, and yet never losing or consuming (my capital) my spade?

Out of what fund, or out of whose labor, could the replacing of the lost steel be taken, the making good of the wear and tear? Is there any fund of value to which one can apply?

Is the wearing away of my spade just the *consumption* of my product? Is it just one of the things, or events, I have to count upon in my conflict with nature (or rather in my working harmoniously with nature) in drawing a livelihood from her bosom? Is the renovation of the spade, or the making of a new spade a contingency on which every tiller must reckon, a necessary labor to secure the advantages which toil derives in the possession and use of a spade? and must I make a new spade, or repair the old one, entirely out of my own toil or resources? Is not the use or consumption of every barrel of flour, in so far as I can make anybody pay me for that use, just the same as my use or consumption of my spade? Though I work with the spade, and simply consume the flour, are not both spade and flour aiding me, so to speak, in further production? If I could claim that somebody shall pay me for the use of my spade, could I not also claim that somebody shall pay me for the use of my flour?

In a word, is there an equivalent value existing anywhere under the sun which can be set over against the consumption, the utility in exercise, of the entire products of the industrial world, or of any single product?

If there is no fund out of which a single tiller with a spade can claim for the wear and tear, or consumption, or use of his spade, where is the fund out of which any claim can be made for the use or consumption of any "capital" or product whatsoever? If there is no fund for the one can there be any fund for the million? If there is no fund for one form of "capital," the spade, can there be a fund for any, or all other form of "capital" or tools?

Is not the use of all the products of industry, without a single exception, simply the consumption of all these products? And is not the consumption of all these products simply the use of all these products? Does it make any difference, so far as the claim I can make on any one outside is concerned, that in using my spade *I toil*, but in using my flour *I enjoy*?

If I am a maker and seller of spades, can I make the labor of some one tributary to me (that is, take his labor without equivalent) in renovating or replacing the tools I use up in making my spades?

Can I, as held by the economists, cause my produce, or my labor, to bring forth two profits when exchanged, a profit for me, the worker, and a profit for my "capital," the spade?

If I could do so, would it not be two profits into one pocket (for the spade, my capital, has no pocket) for the one thing produced; two labors drawn in for one expenditure of labor given out? If this can be done, would it be the corruption of all commerce, the destruction of all industry?

Is not all profit simply *labor saved* by men exchanging with each other the products of their toil? How could you save labor *twice* out of one exchange? Is it not the case that you could only do it by taking away all the other man's profit, thus destroying his labor?

If I cannot get two or double profits out of my labor with my own spade (or capital), how can double profits be got out of industry if the spade (or capital) happen to be borrowed? If you do so, will it not be at the cost of ruining industry?

Is there more effective labor as a rule when men, as freemen, work with their own spades (their own capital) than when they work, as slaves, with borrowed spades (other's capital)? Is disinheritance a stimulant to industry or the reverse?

Can the produce of my labor, when working with a borrowed spade, be broken up into a half profit for me and a half profit for the owner of the spade, as is sometimes taught by the economists?

Is capital content with half profits? Could I then exist in competition with those who work with their own spades, and who get one full, complete, and unbroken profit?

Can values, as taught by the economists, be thus broken up and mutilated, and values still remain intact? Can labor and capital ever work thus together as friends and fellows? or must they ever be, if so compelled to work, as mortal enemies? Is there, or can there be, any *mutual* interest in such a state of things between labor and capital? Is not all this talk about capital and labor working harmoniously together expressive of an unnatural divorce between labor and capital? What is capital but the tools and appliances of industry? Ought not industry to own its own tools? Can they ever, by any lawful or natural process, be divorced?

Can a tiller of land produce two profits out of his toil, one for himself, and one, under the name of rent, for a landlord?

If he cannot do so, is not rent an illegitimate and destructive tax on industry?

Must not this amount called rent be taken either out of his own toil, or, by a manipulation of prices, out of the toil of others? Would it be right to make other people pay for your rent by manipulating prices? If it be taken out of your own toil, can you submit to this deduction from your labors and yet make onward progress in thrift and prosperity? In other words, can you continue to prosper, and your family support by its toil another family which does not toil?

If I cannot make anybody pay for my worn steel spade (for use of capital), who pays the rent of all factories? Is it the workmen in these factories or is it not? Is it a reduction from the fruits of their toil for which it is *impossible* you can make an economic equivalent, even to the extent of one cent?

Can a tiller of land afford to have his profit reduced one-half in order that one who does not work may take from him the other half under the name of rent?

What do you mean when you say "I have sunk capital in the soil"? Can you do anything else than labor on the soil? Is not the produce the return for your labor? When you have laid a mile of drain or tile pipes on your farm, have you not labored just the same as you have labored when you sow and reap the grain? If a hired man has laid these pipes, has he not simply labored on the soil, and is not the drain the fruit of his labor? Some will tell you that the mere fact of your stepping out of the drain and laying down the spade and a hired man taking it up and stepping in *necessarily* increases the produce; do you believe this?

If I borrow the spade from a neighbor and use it for a year, do I thereby create any fund out of which to pay for the use or wearing out of the spade? Have I any more returns than when I worked with my own spade? If there is not, can there be a fund to pay for this borrowing or any borrowing, or for any capital?

If I return this spade in the same condition as when I borrowed it, that is, renew the spade or make good the wear and tear, and also pay a sum for the use or consumption of the spade, am I as well off as if I had used my own spade, enjoyed all the produce, and made good the wear and tear of the spade for the year, or, say, made a new spade for myself when the other was finished?

If all producers in the world have to do this—that is, if capital (by which I mean the tools and appliances of industry) demand a return everywhere as capital, the spade demand a return as a spade—of what use to industry are all the appliances of industry, all the new machinery and tools invented?

Can you diminish my labors on the ground that your father or grandfather or great-grandfather worked and toiled and accumulated?

Does the year's produce come to hand on the ground that *I own my spade*, or

with their borrowed reverse? Is some-  
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on the ground that *I work* with the spade? If you say it is on these grounds *mutually*, in what manner does ownership give birth to its share of the product? Does the world's annual production of good and enjoyable things—food, clothing, shelter, fuel, and so forth—make its appearance because of *ownership* or because of *labor*?

Does "capital," the spade, give birth to industry, or industry to "capital," the spade?

Has the wage-worker, *before* he gets his wages at the end of the week or month, given birth to capital each day of the week or month, or has he not? Is he the creator of the capital (the goods) or is he not?

In taking in my return after working with my capital (my spade) do I take a portion for myself and give another portion to my spade (my capital) as if it were a living creature, a sentient being? Could you pay anything to a spade? If the spade as a spade is entitled to the money, what right have I, though the owner of the spade, to handle the money? Not a silly question, I can assure you, in presence of what capital does demand.

Does the industry go before capital, or does capital go before industry? If industry creates capital, how can capital, as taught by Mill, go before industry?

Is capital, according to Mill and the economists, the result of saving, or "abstinence" as they call it, or is it the result of labor? Is acting the part of a miser the source from which goods and products spring, or is labor the source? Do not economists teach that all products (capital) are the result of saving or of abstaining from using? Is this true or false? Is it absurd? Can the world abstain from using its products?

If the worker does not create the capital, who creates it?

Is my return the fruit of the toil of my spade (capital), or is it the fruit of the toil of the human being (labor), who held the spade?

Does a spade *toil*?

Does capital *toil*?

Or is it human beings who *toil*?

Do the employed depend for a living on the employers? Or is it the reverse, the employers depending for a living on the employed? Is it the workers who depend for a living on the non-workers, or do the non-workers depend for a living on the workers? Do the capitalists sustain laborers, or is it the laborers who sustain capitalists? Is there, or is there not, a *mutual* sustaining? If you say it is mutual, then do you not say that the spade sustains, in part, the toiler, and is, as a spade, entitled to have returns? Would you not be stating an absurdity? Would you not be forced to hold that the man who stood by, doing no work at all, is a producer? Would not this be absurd? Would you not be compelled to hold that ownership is production? Would not this be holding a manifest untruth?

Three men, A, B, and C, go out to make hay. The hay belongs to B. They work ten days at hay-making. Each puts in an exact equivalent of work. Has not each an equal value in these ten days' toil? Could B take from either A or C to add to his accumulations on the plea of owning the hay? If B furnished the scythes, forks, rakes, etc., could he reduce the value of the work of A and C, on the ground that they were using his capital to save his hay? If the hay could not have been saved without the labor of the three, are not A and C saving hay as much as B? Has B put any more labor or value into that hay during these ten days than A and C? Are there not just three equivalent labor values in the case? If B adds to the value something more than these three, where does he get it? Must he not rob somebody to procure it if it has no existence in the labors of A, B and C? If B adds 25 or 50 or 100 per cent. to the price of the hay over and above these values embodied in it by the three toilers, is he not corrupting values and taking what never can be his? Apply these simple but crucial questions to the entire field of factory labor, from the time the simplest implement was fashioned to the present day, and see what becomes of the claims of capital.

When employers pay employees wages in bits of money, have they given anything on which they have spent an iota of labor?

When employees hand over all the results of their toil to employers do they give that on which they have spent a great deal of labor?

Should men be paid for handing over bits of money? If so, why? Is it true, or not true, that the workers give away all the week's labor of their hands in exchange for a few pieces of money on which employers have spent no labor of their hands?

Should profits belong to the men who do a week's work, or to the men who hand over bits of money, that is, *who buy*?

Do the employers hand over a completed product of labor (money) which came into their hands complete, the work of which was all done at the mine and a trifle at the mint, and on which they have spent no labor, and which they hand over exactly as they received it?

Do the employees hand over completed products of labor which are an embodiment of their toil, and which they have fabricated from first to last out of the raw materials?

Is not this the constant intercourse between employers and employees, the men giving up all the products of their toil, and the employers handing over pieces of money on which they have bestowed no toil? Where does equity say the profit should go? Can you have equity at all or in any degree under such a system? Is this universal hiring system the proper one for the human race? Or is it all wrong from beginning to end?

Are men paid for thinking or for working?

If you cannot pay workers for thinking, how can you pay non-workers for thinking?

Is thinking a product of labor?

Is thinking a monopoly for which all workers must be taxed?

Does not everybody think?

Do not the hundred men in a factory do all the thinking necessary in their work?

Can you take their bread and butter to pay for your thinking? Why should not their thinking over the actual making of the goods be at least as good as your thinking *about* the making of the goods? Why should not my actual thinking over all the doing be equal in every respect to your preliminary thinking *about the doing*? How can your thinking about doing be ever an equivalent, in any degree, of another's thinking and doing?

If you take away my money to pay for your thinking, what do you give me in return? When I buy and read a copy of the dead Walter Scott's "Antiquary," am I paying for the dead author's thinking, or for labor in type-setting, press-work, folding, stitching, binding, etc.? Can you monopolize thought? Can you make me guilty of a crime if I see a man working with a tool, and make a similar one for my own use? Would I reduce the produce of his toil one iota by so doing? Are we not all copyists, more or less? Can you take money out of my pocket (under authority of a patent law) because some particular thought entered your brain on 1st January and which might enter my brain on 1st February? Did you create form and size and density and resistance and force, that you can monopolize these things in the working of some tool and call them yours? Is the *form* of that particular bolt or screw *yours*; that you dare anybody, under pains and penalties, to make the same? What right have you thus to forbid thought, particular thought? Would not your claim be the worst of tyranny?

If I buy a yard of ribbon over the counter, can I claim a profit because I buy?

If I sell a yard of ribbon over the counter, can I claim a profit because I sell?

Are not buying and selling simply relative terms, each of the two parties at the same moment a buyer and a seller—one selling ribbons and buying money, the

\* I have discussed this subject at length in an article on the Patent Laws in the *Irish World* of 3rd July, 1880.

other selling money and buying ribbons? Do not the principles of exchange teach you that such is the case?

In other words, can the draper, or anybody else, claim for anything but his labor?

In a word, is it not the case that there is no *fund of value* out of which industry can pay for the use, utility, or consumption of its own products? Are there any other products than their own products? If toil has created all the machinery in all the factories throughout the world, ought not all that machinery or its equivalent to be owned by the operatives? I use the word "equivalent" for argument's sake, and for that alone. For what could the world of toil do without its machinery or with merely equivalent value for its machinery? Must it not own and use the implements of its own business? Do the operatives own the implements of their business? Is it not evident that great economic laws have been violated thus to disinheret all industry, all operatives? Do you not perceive that if you admit these claims of capital, that moment you make industry a slave to its own implements, and actually elevate into a master, and a tyrant at that, the tools and appliances fashioned by the hand of toil and designed to be used by that hand in contributing to its progress, comfort and prosperity?

Is it not to propagate what is untrue to affirm that capital (the products of industry) doubles itself in so many years?

Is it not to propagate the truth to affirm that capital (the products of industry) gets worn out, used up, in so many years?

Is not the capitalist who draws in and uses up 10 per cent. of returns every year, simply using up, consuming, a tenth part of the capital every year?

What else can it be but a consumption, by so much, of his product (presuming the capital to be his product)?

Is not the "capital" consumed, say in 10 years? How, then, can it be said not only to exist, but to be doubled?

Instead of capital (goods or produce, tools, implements, or appliances of labor in general) doubling itself in say ten years, is it not the truth that it, the particular capital or portion of capital under consideration, loses itself, is gone entirely, is consumed, in say ten years?

Is it not the case that the great bulk of this so-called "capital"—food, clothing, fuel, etc.—is used up in one year?

Is it not the case that the year's food, the principal capital of all, is the year's consumption—that hardly anything is left—that this, the principal part of all capital, instead of doubling itself every eight or ten years, is all consumed in one year?

Is not, then, a system which builds itself on this notion of capital doubling itself in so many years, building on an absurdity, on a foundation of sand? Is it not all falsehood together? For does not capital claim to be inexhaustible, eternal? Are there not thousands drawing dividends out of capital (British "funds" for example) which is said to have existed intact for centuries?

How is it possible that a capitalist or anybody else can both *use* his capital, his products, and *have* his capital, his products—*use* the steel facing from his spade, and *have* the steel facing from his spade?

Is a bit of money, coined metal, removed out of the reach of this general principle of consumption, or decay, or wearing away in the use? If you cannot demand to be paid for *use* of your spade, which helps you to produce, on what ground can you lay claim for *use* of your bits of money, with which you can do nothing but buy? Does a bit of money produce anything? Is it, or is it not, utterly unproductive? Can you do anything else than buy with it, and is buying things producing things?

Does not, then, the 10 per cent. of usury gathered in represent so much oppression on labor, so much taken *from* labor and nothing given in return *to* labor?

Does it not represent the destruction, as it were, of all labor once every ten years? Does not this reveal the whole secret of the oppression of labor, and of the

**labor troubles and strikes? Do you need to travel further or rack your brains in search of the causes for all our industrial and commercial distress? Can commerce prosper when you have thus ruined the industry on which commerce is built?**

**For is not the 10 per cent. taken out of toil? And how can industry give away 10 per cent., all its so-called profit on capital, and have any profit left? Is not this the utter ruin of industry?**

Again, suppose I produce a barrel of flour. Let us, for the sake of simplicity, assume that I make it entirely by my own labor, from the plowing, sowing, reaping, milling, barrelling, until finally handed over to my family for consumption. Can I use, consume, that barrel of flour, and also claim that labor shall recompense me, or pay me, for the use of that barrel of flour? Can I, by any possibility, use and yet have the barrel of flour?

If I gave away that barrel of flour to be consumed by another, is there any process of labor, or of production, or of value, or of finance, by which on the ground of my not using it, but of another using it, I can make that barrel of flour produce as good as itself and another barrel of flour—that is, have at the end of one, five, twenty, or a hundred years, two barrels of flour out of one barrel of flour, and the original barrel also consumed, and all independently of any labor performed by me?

Can the farmer consume, use, his bin of potatoes, and yet have his potatoes? his barnful of grain or hay, and yet have his grain or hay? his stalled ox, and yet have his ox in the stall? his tinnet of butter, and yet have his butter in the tinnet?

If he, the farmer who did the work, cannot consume and also have his products, on what ground can a man who does no work claim to use or consume a tenth of his loaned product every year (commonly called interest), and yet have not only the entire product, but have it doubled at the end of ten years? Does nature actually reverse its inexorable laws for the sake of a money lender?

If there is no law by which the tiller, who does so much hard work, can both use his products and yet have them and have them increased, by what law can a banking institution, where you see nothing used but pens, a few ledgers, and bits of paper promising to pay, use its capital (whatever that may be), and yet have its capital, and have it doubled after the lapse of a few years? If there is such a law, will you explain it? I am sure every gentleman on this jury is impatient to know by what law of political economy or finance every paper bank can use and yet double its product every 8 or 10 years, whilst the great bulk of all the products of industry are consumed, used up every year. How can men who do nothing have their capital doubled in a few years, whilst every toiler, every man in the wide field of industry, who toils constantly, has his capital consumed in a short time? How can the capital of the one be replaced and doubled without toil, and the capital of the other have to submit to the law of consumption and decay though he does all the toil? By what strange law is the capital of the one rendered exhaustless and eternal and the capital of the other going constantly to decay?

If such challenges as these can be addressed to capital as it sets forth its claims for use of things actually made by industry, what sort of challenge may be addressed to that other form of capital, credit, that nonentity, that myth of myths, that scandal of the age, which, lending NO THING, yet compels industry to surrender EVERY GOOD THING?

Surely here is matter for thought for one week.

Montreal, 15th March, 1881.

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## No. 16.

CONCLUSION OF THE LAND CATECHISM.—SUBMITTING THE CASE TO THE JURY.—THE QUESTION OF CAPITAL AND INCREASE WITHOUT LABOR—IT CAN'T BE DONE.—THE WAGES SYSTEM—SHOULD IT BE? NO FREE CONTRACTS UNDER WAGE-PAYING OR RENT-PAYING CONDITIONS!—THE LINES OF THE LABOR CONFLICT.—NOT A BATTLE OF A LITTLE MORE BREAD AND BUTTER MERELY, BUT OF THE HIGHER CHARACTER OF ABSOLUTE JUSTICE UNTO EVERY ONE.

Is credit, when in exercise, the getting into your possession the products of industry without payment, or is it not?

If it be the former, is credit, in exercise, a blessing or a curse to industry? Who bears the losses imposed by this credit system—that is, the sums added to the prices of goods to pay for the "credit"? Is it laid on the backs of the workers, and so paid by industry; or is it laid on the backs of the non-workers, the capitalists? Is it possible, or is it impossible, that a non-worker *could* pay these sums? Where could he get them when he produces nothing?

When a man says that his one bit of yellow metal called a dollar has, at the end of a few years, *produced* two bits of yellow metal called dollars, is he stating what is false or is he telling the truth? Can a bit of money produce other bits of money called interest? Is the entire system a system of truth or a system of falsehood?

Are additions to the money of the world made from the bits of coined money afloat? or are these additions made by the labor of the miners in the mines adding to the stock? That is to say, were all gold and silver mining to cease, would the coined pieces in existence keep up or double their number by procreating themselves? Money lenders say so—do you believe it?

Is it true or is it false when it is said that a corporation lending out five millions of dollars creates another five millions of dollars every eight or ten years? All the money of the world may be said to be lent on interest. Is it true that all the money of the world is doubled, in shape of interest, every eight or ten years?

I am sure I am far within the mark when I say that there are fifty dollars lent (or said to be lent) on interest for every actual dollar in existence. Can you lend a product or instrument of labor which has no existence? If you cannot lend spades which have no existence how can you lend dollars which have no existence? How can fifty people use one dollar? If they are all paying for the use of it shouldn't they all be using it? And is not the using of it in every instance merely *momentary*, the mere act of buying, of handing it across the counter, and an *act* (or use) utterly unproductive? How can money not in existence at all give birth to more money, even assuming money to have that which it has not, procreative power?

A lends to B a ten-dollar piece at 1 per cent. per annum, B lends it to C at 1½, C to D at 2, D to E at 2½, E to F at 3, F to G at 3½, G to H at 4, H to I at 4½, I to J at 5, and so on up to T to U at 10 per cent. Can any power on earth give to this ten-dollar piece such procreative and accumulating power as is represented by these figures? But if it can give birth to the 1 per cent, can it not give birth to all the rest, which, if you reckon up, you will find is 104½ per cent. per annum, or the ten-dollar piece more than doubled in twelve months?

Suppose the general rate of interest in a country has been 8 per cent. Let us say it is reduced to 4 per cent., and that the paper currency (all lent as before on interest)

is doubled at the same time, would the interest or burden on the people be reduced one half on all new loans, or would the pressure remain the same by the doubling of the paper?

Does not the money lender destroy *two* great economic laws—1st, that use cannot be paid for, and 2d, that money is utterly unproductive?

Does the lending of things save these things from the inevitable law of consumption? Can they be used up and yet exist? If they cannot, how, then, is it possible for industry to pay continuous interest on continuous loans?

“Nothing from nothing leaves nothing, though all the armies of the world lay siege to the problem.” So writes the editor of the IRISH WORLD.

Is not this modern credit system a system of Communism? Does any one stand on his own feet? When a tall one falls, does he not drag hundreds to ruin? Is not that Communism of the worst character? Has it a single redeeming feature? The Communes with which history generally makes us acquainted are honorable, just and thrifty—what sort of Communism is this which is constantly setting the world in a *panic*, and stands ready at any moment to strangle its neighbors?

Is not the *using* of the product the *consumption* of the product? And can the man who borrows it make anything more out of the consumption or use of it than the man could do who lends it?

If it be true that the man who makes and works with the spade cannot make anybody pay for the wear and tear of that spade, is not that truth just the complement of the other truth, that the man who rents out the spade cannot make anybody pay for the use and wear and tear of that spade? That is to say can Industry do any more than return the spade in the same condition in which it was received, just as if it had to repair or renew its own spade?

If the value of a barrel of flour be \$5, and if it brings that amount in exchange, on what principle can the barrel of flour ever be made to give existence to a barrel and a quarter (\$6.25), or a barrel and a half (\$7.50), or two barrels (\$10.)?

Can it ever do so because it may happen that prompt payment is suspended or delayed? Can you take something out of nothing? Can you take away the whole and yet leave a part?

A man builds a small ferry-boat. Can he take from you for transporting you across the stream, and also something for the construction of the ferry-boat, and yet own all the ferry-boat?

Business increases. A larger ferry-boat is needed. Ten men combine to build it or purchase it, for ten men are needful to work it. Can these ten men, in ferrying you over, make you pay for their labor and also for the cost of building the ferry-boat, and yet keep the entire ownership of the ferry-boat? Can they take your property, the money, in exchange for their property, the ferry-boat, and yet keep the ferry-boat? Would this be trade or industry, or would it be robbery? Speak your mind.

If they can thus take from you a part of your capital, the money, for constructing their capital, the boat, can you not demand an equivalent return from them for constructing your capital, the money? For if the boat needed construction on the stocks, did not your money need construction at the mine and the mint?

Why should they demand a right, if it be a right, and deny the same right to you?

A man builds or buys a ship. Can he take pay from you for carrying yourself or your goods across the Atlantic or Pacific, and also compel you to pay for the cost of constructing the ship, and yet own all the ship? Does he do this, or does he not, when he compels you to pay forever for the capital he has invested in the ship? What equivalent does he give you when, in addition to the charge of carrying you or your goods, he makes you pay for his invested capital, and yet keeps all that capital to himself? A most serious question, is it not?

A number of men build a railway from Montreal to New York. Can they take pay for the cost (or labor) of carrying you to New York, and also make you pay

for constructing the railroad, and yet own all the rails, all the carriages and engines, all the plant, etc. ?

Is it legitimate for you to travel outside of the workers and the labor of the workers in estimating the real cost of conveying passengers and freight from one city to another? If I cannot make you pay for repairing or renewing the cast steel from my spade, how can I make you pay for repairing or renewing my railway, or my ship?

If the men who actually *do* all this work with their own hands, cannot make you pay for their goods and implements of labor and yet keep these goods and implements, on what principle can men called "shareholders," *who do no work at all*, compel you to pay for their goods, their implements, their machines, and yet keep all these, and give you nothing? Are we not driven in upon the great principle, that the men who toil and do the work can make nothing for the men who toil not and do not work?

Are not all the half yearly and yearly dividends on capital so much taken out of labor and no equivalent remuneration made to labor, and yet all the capital preserved intact for the shareholders *by labor*; that is, the consumed capital constantly replaced gratuitously by labor whilst not enjoyed by labor? If this be so, is it or is it not the very refinement of cruelty to Industry? Are these not most serious questions to be placed before a Christian community? What about our moral obligations?

If labor cannot, on its own account, do such a thing as this *for itself*, how can it do it for those who do not labor? If such things are done, must not Industry be reduced to the position of a beast of burden, to a veritable slave?

Can you compel industry to preserve your capital intact, to keep your property in repair, and yet render no equivalent to industry? And how can you render an equivalent unless you are a producer? And if you are never a producer, by what law can you come between your capital and the inevitable law of consumption and use?

Are not the amounts paid as interest, say on National Debts, a total extinction of these debts when the amounts so paid correspond in total amount with the principal of the debts? Must not this inevitably be so if money produces nothing? Will any mere contract set aside an inexorable law like this?

As to the principal of these debts, did it go into the pockets of the toilers? Can you take either principal or interest out of any other pockets than those of the toilers? If the toilers did not get the money, is it just to empty their pockets to pay principal or interest? Have you, by means of these debts, swept our toiling companions away by hundreds of thousands from the plough to perish miserably on battle fields, and do you lay the cost of these wars on the backs of the descendants of these toilers so slain?

When one asks you upbraidingly, "Are you going to use up your capital?" what does he mean? Does he mean that the way to produce is not to use it? Does he mean that the true way to use it is not to use it? Does he mean that another using it is not using it, or consuming it? Does he mean that he will take every year a tenth part from some other person's capital (that is, from the toil of the producer), and add it to *his* capital without doing a stroke of work? In a word, is it the question of a fool or of a wise man, of a thoughtless or a reflecting man?

Does the circumstance of men making contracts, verbal or written, to do such things, make the doing of such things right? If political economy says plainly, "this can't be done; men can't do these things and live," will a written contract, or any contract, or acts of Parliament, render possible to be done that which the laws of this great science say it is impossible to be done?

Are not the sums paid in name of rents, say for a house or farm, *the purchase money*, so far as paid, of that house or farm? When as much money has been paid as meets the cost of building the house or of improving the farm, has not the house or farm then been fully paid for? Can one house or farm give birth or

existence to two, five or ten houses or farms, outside of labor, independently of labor? Can the house or farm reproduce other houses or farms when the barrel of flour and the half-inch of steel cannot reproduce barrels of flour or spades? Is the economic law bearing on the spade not just the same as the economic law bearing on the house or farm? Is not every house in a city built, and every farm in the country improved and cultivated by human hands and by human labor? If working men build all the houses and stores *and receive true equivalents*, ought not all working men to own values equivalent to these houses, stores, etc.? If they do so, where are these values? Can you point them out?

If use be gratuitous does it not *necessarily* follow that every dollar paid in name of so-called rent, whether as regards houses, or farms, or factories, etc., is just so much paid on account of the cost of all these? If you say that use is not gratuitous, do you not then compel industry to be at the cost of producing everything, and also lay on it a tax in the use or consumption of the things of its own creation, that is, pile a double load on its afflicted back?

When all the currency of a country is lent and re-lent on interest, is not the result to lay upon industry an enormous and grinding tax called interest? Is it right that industry should be at the cost or toil of raising all its products, constructing all its commodities, and yet be compelled (as is done by this modern lending system) to pay for the use, consumption, or gratification of the very things it has raised and made by its toil?

If this be done, is not industry, instead of being once refreshed and gratified in its product coming to hand, twice exhausted, doomed to a double sweat of the brow, to a double curse? Is not this additional curse laid by man on his toiling brother a burden which cannot be borne, a destruction of industry, a sentence of extermination? Is it not capital saying to labor, Go till the ground from whence thou wert taken, and when you have tilled and produced, go till and labor a second time before you can use a morsel of what you have produced? Is this honorable or is it infamous?

Can you take principal, interest, rent, capital, dividend, tax, commodity, wages, or any product whatever out of anything else than human toil?

Has the industrial world, by this modern system, almost entirely lost the control, the ownership of its own products?

Is not the ownership now in the hands of non-producers?

Is not the compact between capital and the working world this—We will give you a sum of money called “wages” *out of the value of the things you make* (for we have no other source or fund anywhere from which to take these wages) just sufficient to keep you and your family in life; you will accept of these wages and make a full surrender to us of the ownership of everything you create, to become our property, to be priced and sold and done with just as we please or consider best for our own enrichment and advantage; you agree to divorce yourselves entirely from all your property, and all rights to property, and we agree to pay you your wages at the week’s or the month’s end; and you also, on your part, agree to compete with each other for the lowest possible living wages—that is, we will employ only those who can cut under their fellows? Is this the compact, or is it not?

Can any *free* contract be made by work-people after such a surrender of natural rights, of industrial freedom, of human liberty, of the entire fruits of toil, of the very constitution under which God has placed man on the earth and regulated human society? Can it have any other issue than that the wage class should become the slaves of capital? Is not every “strike” the alarming writhings of a blinded giant who has surrendered his liberty, who groans under his chains, and is conscious that terrible wrongs have been inflicted on himself and family, though he cannot well tell how?

Can *free* contracts exist under a *wage-paying* or a *rent-paying* system involving the surrender of all industrial rights?

Is the employment of machinery designed to *lessen* the emoluments, the returns,

of all workers? or is it designed to increase these returns? If capital is entitled to all produced by its aid, how can industry ever benefit by machinery?

Is the social and moral condition of the factory "hand" and his family to be compared with the condition of the old time hand-loom weavers? Who suffers from the comparison—the independent man of the old style with his rosy children alternately at school and play, under his eye, and enough to spare at his board, and the good broad cloth on his back every Sunday? or the pale and sickly factory hand, with his little children drafted into the factory to eke out the existence of the family, and yet barely able, and very often not able, to keep the wolf from the door, and his boys and maidens away from under the parental eye? Answer, which do you prefer? Which of the two is best, for the state, for the church, for the family, for morality, for all that is good? Have you ever given a sober and anxious thought to the unutterable perils of this factory life? Has it given you any concern that anxious and decent parents, working men and women, should have to face such a condition of things as regards their offspring? Has it troubled you at all as you have seen the crowds sweep past you at the closing hour of the day?

A paper recently read before the Chicago Trade and Labor Union, says:—"The constant employment at one sixty-fourth part of a shoe not only offers no encouragement to mental activity, but dulls by its monotony the brain of the employee to such an extent that the power to think and reason is almost lost." It is said that a person employed in a shoemaker's establishment, is only the 64th part of a shoemaker, the business being now so minutely divided, and each worker doing only a part. Have we here not only what points to the ruin of the handicraft but to the ruin of the man?

Is the labor question one of higher or lower wages, good or poor wages, strikes or non-strikes? Or does it take a far nobler and wider range and demand why there should be a wages system at all?

Can the industry of the world return all the borrowed money, the principal lent, at the end of 8 or 10 years, and also produce a similar amount for the lenders in say 8 or ten years? That is to say, can industry work hard for 8 or 10 years, and at the end of the period *have nothing*?

Is the Bible astray when it commands men, all men, never to lend anything (mark, anything) on usury or interest? Are there not the most urgent reasons for the prohibition? Is not God wiser than men? Does not Scripture here recognize the great economic principle that men must give toil only in producing their products, *not also in using or consuming them*? Is not that grand economic truth lying on the surface, at our hand? Is this great Bible command the Magna Charta of industry, or is it not? Ought not such a command to be studied now with the deepest concern by all men?

Speaking as an economist, I ask, Is there value in use or consumption of commodities? The mind conceives the value of a thing often as with the light of intuition—can the mind conceive of the value of the use of a thing? Is it not, as an economic principle, *unthinkable*? You can think at once of the value of your barrel of flour—can you think of the value of your use or eating of your barrel of flour? Is it not the case that you can no more compare use and value than you can compare height and density? Do not points of comparison fail as much in the one case as in the other?

In what light do all these questions bring the money-lender before his fellow-men? In what light does he stand with regard to God's revealed will and written law?

If all wages and salaries are paid at the end of a week, a fortnight, a month, or three months, does not capital get the possession, the ownership, the use of the fruits of toil before payment? Is not this the same economic principle at work as if all rent-payers claimed that the rents they pay go as purchase money of so much of the property they have rented? Can you point out any difference between the wage-workers and salary-receivers constantly surrendering all their goods and

labor without payment or before they are paid, and the house or land-owner surrendering his house or farm before payment? Is the surrender of the goods different from the surrender of the house? Is it not exactly the same principle? If the principle is good as applied to the payers of wages, why should it not be equally good as applied to the payers of rent? Do not all discounters of money approve the principle when they mulct the borrowers in 8 or 10 per cent., taking the interest from the face of the note 3 or 6 months before it is due? Are not these men enjoying the use of the rent of the money 3 or 6 months before it is due?

If money-lenders thus enjoy the use of millions of money constituted of the so-called interest or rent of money before it is due or earned, and if they thus enter on premature occupancy and possession of property, could they consistently find fault with people entering on premature occupancy and possession of houses, and claiming that their payments be considered as part purchase money of the property? Are not the two cases, so far, identical? Is not the principle the same when people enter on possession of unearned rent of money as when they enter on possession of unearned property?

But if use is absolutely gratuitous (as, indeed, many economists are now compelled to admit), are we not hedged up absolutely to a position from which there is no possibility of escape, namely, that every cent paid in name of rent is a cent paid on account of purchase money of the property, just as every cent paid in name of interest is a cent paid in extinction of the principal?

Do those who exact monthly house rents in advance enter upon possession of unearned property (in money) or do they not?

Is there a single question I have put, or a single sentence I have uttered, which would justify you in saying that I, as a labor reformer or as an economist, am advocating that people should use others' spades and not pay for them, should use capital belonging to others without payment? Does not every question, on the contrary, go to shew that nobody should take another's labor without full equivalent? Does not every line I have written go to shew that every man should be secured in the produce of his own toil? And are there not millions toiling at the plough, yea in every department of industry, who are deeply interested in all that we have discussed?

Finally, do these questions, as I have endeavored to set them forth, lay down the lines on which the entire conflict between labor and capital must be fought out and settled? Do they traverse a large portion of the field of political economy? Can most of them be answered without the necessity of any very arduous logical process of thought? Do they embrace problems of living and practical importance to the race? If so, ought they not to be presented before the minds of our youthful friends at our schools and colleges, in order that they may be induced to think them out for themselves, and so find that political economy is not the dismal science it is so often represented to be, but a delightful and deeply interesting system of consensual truth, replete with lofty and noble themes, and specially needful to be known by the generation now coming upon the scene? And is it not often better for us simply to foreshadow truth, in order that the reader himself, excited and sustained by the stupendous interests at stake, may bring all the force of his mind to bear on the solution of the problems before him, and thus share in the victory to be won and in the great mental gratification which never fails to reward the man of patient and continuous intellectual effort and research?

Montreal, 22nd March, 1881.

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## USURY.

### SMITH'S DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE.

In Dr. WM. SMITH's Dictionary of the Bible (American edition, HURD & HOUGHTON) we find, under the head of "Usury," vol. iv., p. 3,363, the following note:—

"The word usury has come in modern English to mean excessive interest upon money loaned, either formally illegal, or, at least, oppressive. At the time of the Anglican version, however, the word did not bear this sense, but meant simply interest of any kind upon money, thus strictly corresponding to the Hebrew *nachash*. It is to be remembered that the Jewish law prohibiting usury forbade the taking of any interest whatever for money lent, without regard to the rate of interest; but this prohibition related only to the Jews, their brethren, and there was no command regulating either the taking of interest or its amount from foreigners."

The initials to this note are F. G.—that is, the Rev. FRANCIS GARDEN, M.A., sub-dean of Her Majesty's Chapel Royal.

On reading it we could scarcely credit our eyesight. How could a Christian commentator make so serious a mistake with this text open before him:—

"If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him or increase; but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals upon increase."—LEVITICUS, xxv. 35, 36, 37.

Surely the modern lenders must feel thankful to so liberal and considerate an interpreter as the Rev. Mr. GARDEN.

On turning to the article "loan" (initials H. W. P.—that is the Rev. HENRY W. PHILLOTT, M.A., rector of Staunton-on-Wye, England) we find the following:—

"This prohibition of usury was afterwards limited to Hebrews only."

The reference must here be to Deuteronomy xxiii. 19, 20:—

"Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother, usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent upon usury. Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury."

Every student of his Bible knows that Deuteronomy, in addition to being a rehearsal of past events, is mainly a recapitulation of laws previously given from the mouth of the Most High, not an abrogation of these laws. In this same book of Deuteronomy we find such words as these:—

"He loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment. Love ye, therefore, the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

But usury, as everybody knows, is an oppressive thing, and it was forbidden to the Jews because it was oppressive. Mr. PHILLOTT's interpretation, therefore, would convert this passage into—

"Hate ye, therefore, the stranger, for ye were strangers in a strange land; lend him thy money on usury that thou mayest oppress him and do him evil." He confesses to an error in Leviticus, and makes Deuteronomy undo what has been done by Leviticus.

The passage in Deuteronomy neither repeals nor limits the prohibition against usury.

Our Saviour himself gives us the key to its interpretation. It is a *permissive* law, and is to be classed with the permissive law as to giving a bill of divorce. Moses, CHRIST says, commanded the Jews to give their wives a bill of divorce when they put them away for trivial causes. If the Jew, because of the hardness of his heart, puts away his wife for some cause outside the limit imposed by Scripture, then let him throw around the woman some shadow of legal protection by giving her a written bill of divorce. If the Jew is so covetous that his insatiable desire to increase by usury is not to be thwarted, then let him make the foreigner, not his brother, the victim. This is the scope and sense of the passage. See Deut. xxiii, 19, 20.

Now then, say Messrs. GARDEN and PHILLOTT, let us all go in for money lending on a big scale—all are foreigners now—brotherhood is forever abolished and gone. How does the reader like the interpretation? What Christian is ready to endorse it?

"And if a stranger sojourn in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself."—*Leviticus* xix, 33, 34. Our modern interpreters would trample this beautiful passage under foot. Vex him, say they, he is not of our kin; let us not love him; let us hate him; let us pile cent per cent upon his devoted head, and if he cannot pay up, evict him.

In addition to all this we have to remark that the passage in *Leviticus* xxv, 35-37 actually speaks of the foreigner and sojourner as *brethren* of the Jews. If thy brother be waxen poor, relieve him, even though he, that brother, be a stranger or sojourner. The entire spirit of these laws is to impress the mind with the fact that all men are brethren, and to be treated by each other as such.

There have not been wanting expositors, who, in their desire to fortify the money lending system, have actually advanced the parable of the talents as a justification of the prohibited practice of usury! The more pious the modern money lender, the more sedulously does he seek to shelter himself beneath the folds of this beautiful parable. The very thought of such a thing is repulsive. Used merely in illustration, there is no more thought in that parable of justifying the practice of usury, than there is of justifying or commanding the practice of unrighteousness in the conduct of the ruler in the parable of the unjust judge.

We are not yet done with this *Dictionary of the Bible*.

"In making loans no prohibition is pronounced in the law against taking a pledge of the borrower, but certain limitations are prescribed in favor of the poor."

The entire spirit of Scripture is against pledge-taking. "Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts." How is that for pledge taking we would like to know? "Lend, hoping for nothing again." But we forget—that is the gospel and not the law. It faces us, however, in the word of God, despite all that the "dictionary" can say, or all that one is accustomed to hear of the gospel made use of to swamp the law.

"The outer garment which formed the poor man's principal covering by night as well as by day, if taken in pledge, was to be returned before sunset. A bedstead, however, might be taken. (*Exodus* xxii, 26, 27, *Deut.* xxiv, 12, 13, compared with *Job* xxii, 6, *Proverbs* xxii, 27.)"

This made us open our eyes wider still. What! a man's bedclothes may not be taken but his bedstead may be taken. A libel, a vile libel, we cried, upon the word of God. We had read that word carefully enough to know that no authority could there be found for carrying off anybody's bedstead. We therefore hastened to turn up the passages. Here they are. We ask our readers to judge for themselves if they authorize any greedy money-lender to carry off a man's bedstead:—

"If thou at all take thy neighbor's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin; wherein shall he sleep?"

Anything about carrying off a man's bedstead here?

" And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge. In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment and bless thee."

The Commentator is, indeed, hard up for a bedstead who advances this as authority for a greedy wretch taking a poor man's bedstead from beneath him.

Now for JOB, the lordly, patient, suffering JOB.

" For thou (JOB) hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing."

TEMANITE! you lie.

Let JOB himself answer the vile slander.

" If I had seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; if I had lifted up my hand against the fatherless, then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone."

MR. PHILLOTT, Rector of Staunton-on-Wye, it is not good this that you do. It is not good to cite ELIPHAZ the Temanite as an authority that GOD permits a man's bedstead to be carried off from under him. Gather up the spirit of these texts and we will trust your interpretation more. Your interpretation, it pains us to say, is an utter subversion of the divine law, and goes to justify the very thing that that law condemns.

Proverbs xxii. 27: " If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?" A warning against bedstead-takers (and a dreadful warning, too, if Commentators will but look at it in its naked simplicity), but surely no authority for the taking of bedsteads.

So much for the passages referred to.

And what are we to say of the prohibition against any money-lender whomsoever entering the house of any man, rich or poor, to take a pledge? What do Commentators say of modern evictions with such a command before their eyes?

Jews were permitted to sell diseased meat to strangers or aliens if they were determined to make merchandise of it—Deut. xiv. 21. Does Mr. PHILLOTT approve of us Christians selling each other diseased meat? See how men who try to undermine Scripture get entangled in their own logic.

God gave the Israelites a king in his wrath, and yet he makes careful provision as to the sort of king the people should choose. Take one of thine own nation, he says, but not a stranger.

Only for the Jews? A most perilous principle of interpretation! Nay, nay, GOD and the money-lender are face to face, as they have ever been since the world began, in mortal antagonism. All Scripture, all the ages, all the fathers of the Church, all the great writers of antiquity, unite in a voice of condemnation of usury or interest. It is the poor who pay all the usury in the world; and it is usury or money-lending which makes them poor and keeps them poor.

The world is at last awakening to this thing. Mankind are beginning to call upon the money-lender to produce his titles for his nefarious and destructive trade.

Smith's *Bible Dictionary* is a standard and most valuable work. Its praise is in all the churches. But we feel that it is time that these modern interpretations of Usury, Interest, Loans, and Pledge-taking, were brought to book.

I need hardly remind the Bible reader that the usury forbidden in Scripture is increase in any degree, any and every rate of interest—that a tenth of one per cent. per annum is usury as much as 50 per cent.

Montreal, 29th January, 1881.

## THE USURY OF LAND.

RENT PAID FOR LAND IS ONLY ONE FORM OF USURY.—ALL  
RENT FOR LAND IS USURIOUS.

About twenty years since I contributed to *Hunt's Merchant's Magazine*, a New York Journal which has long held an honorable and foremost place in its special branch of literature, a number of articles on various topics connected with money and labor reform. I transfer to these pages the following extract from one of these papers entitled, "The effects of Usury on Prices and Wages." I had not then of course given the subject anything like the study which it has since received. I recollect at this date that my remarks on land and rent came in as incidental only to the large and important question discussed under the above title. I suppose I did not then think I would live to witness such a land movement as is now before the world.

"These remarks apply with equal truth and force to the case of rent or hire of land. There is no difference in principle—the parallel is perfect. The rent of land is just the usury of land, neither less nor more, and is exactly equivalent to the rent of money. In countries where the usury of land largely prevails, we witness the same results as in commercial communities—the many taxed for the support of the few. Let no timid reader imagine that we are about to advocate anything like an inroad on vested rights. Our conservatism inclines all the other way. If the evils of usury, whether in regard to money or land, have become too vast, or the interests involved too powerful to be cured by legislative action, they must just be endured till they are settled in some way concurrent with the natural course of events. We find no fault either with the possession of land or money, *so far as fairly acquired*. Our remarks have reference only to the usurious use to which each is put. Lending on interest is, in every case, at variance with the interests of the commonwealth. If the anti-usury principles advocated in these pages were in full vigor throughout the world, I should be very content to leave unwieldy estates and unwieldy fortunes to take care of themselves. If they could not hold their own against the working of these peaceful, reasonable and orderly principles, it would be better both for their owners and the community that they should in some measure be shorn of their strength, or reduced from their unwieldy proportions.

"Wherever the usury or renting of land prevails, a tax is placed upon the farmers, (or rather the laborers, for labor in this, as in many other cases, is the last resort,) to support the landowners. The tax thus placed upon the farmers of England, Scotland and Ireland is equivalent to the amount of the rental of these countries. In Ireland especially, where middlemen prevail, who may be compared to the speculators in commerce, this tax grinds down the laborers to the last degree. It is a useless, burdensome and pernicious tax, for, whilst elevating the few to a dangerous height of wealth and power, it depresses the many in a corresponding degree, to a condition, comparatively speaking, of pauperism and bondage. If a landowner rents out ten farms at £200 a piece, the amount drawn out of the produce of these farms to satisfy the demands of the landlord will be £2,000. No doubt this sum is either added to the prices of the produce raised by the people on these farms, and thus comes out of the pockets of the consumers, or it is deducted from the wages of those employed in raising the produce. The laborers' wages are thus not only reduced, but the very products they are instrumental in raising are enhanced to them in price. It is not, strictly speaking, so many farmers or farm workers, supporting one landlord by their labors. The evil must be measured by the amount of rental which must be paid to the landlord. It necessarily varies in intensity from the most violent rack-rent down to the simplest fee. If, in the

case supposed, each of the ten farmers clears £200, the landlord clears £2,000, ten times more than each of the farmers, or as much as all the ten combined. This sum the landlord spends amongst surrounding tradesmen, land factors, or lawyers, perhaps in ministering to the luxury of distant cities, or in adding improvements to his estate that the market value of it may be increased, and thus a larger rental or tax got from the next tenants; or, it may be, like my Lord Harkaway, in horse racing, hunting, grooms, horse jockies and such like. So, instead of the ten farms only supporting one landlord, they do in reality support every one supported by the landlord, or as far as the rental goes. *Price* affords always an easy means of accomplishing these results.

"The renting of land is identical, in all its more serious results, with the hire of money. It exercises upon the laborer the same continued pressure; it degrades the many and elevates the few; it has given rise to anarchy, confusion, and strife in every period of the world's history, setting in hostile array the different classes of society; and the careful student may everywhere trace its effects in revolution and blood. Bible commentators who skim the surface of things fondly indulge in the thought of what they conceive to be the harmlessness of lending money on interest by what they conceive to be the harmlessness of the renting of land."

—*Hunt's Merchant's Magazine*, vol. xliii, 1860.

## PRESBYTERIANISM AND USURY.

THE WORD OF FAITH DISTORTED IN FAVOR OF MAMMON.—  
GOD'S LAWS REVISED TO SUIT MAN'S INIQUITIES.—HOW  
THE COMMAND, "TAKE NOT USURY OR INCREASE OF  
THY BROTHER," MEANT WHAT IT SAID IN OLD TIMES,  
AND HOW IT MEANS THE OPPOSITE TO-DAY.

A few weeks ago I reviewed in this Journal what Smith's Bible Dictionary has to say on the subject of usury and loans. I showed that the comments made in that work on these topics were utterly unreliable and unscriptural.

To-day I propose to say a few words as to what is set forth on the same subjects in a book published in Philadelphia last year, bearing the following title:—“The Westminster Bible Dictionary: prepared for the Presbyterian Board of Publication: by the Rev. Thomas J. Sheppard, D.D.”

Were it only a quibble over the derivation or meaning of a couple of words I should certainly pass the subject by. But it becomes a very different matter when commentators lend the weight of their authority to that false, inconsistent, and unscriptural interpretation of passages on which has been built the most stupendous system of iniquity and oppression which the world has ever seen. Both these dictionaries gloss over and fritter away the force of injunctions as permanent and binding as any commandment in the decalogue, and the violation of which is an open and flagrant transgression of God's written law, as well as of those economic principles on which that law is based. It is more than time that the compilers of such works should look into the economy of these questions. For the doctrines they advocate can only have their origin in profound ignorance of the principles of political economy. This ignorance cloaks or condones the sin if the usury is concealed from view by means of some of the modern roundabout methods by which the money drops into the pocket, although the dividends received are as thoroughly and exclusively the fruit of usury as was ever witnessed in Jewish times. And to sustain and justify some silly notions which the commentators have inherited from their immediate predecessors, such as that the advance of commerce required the abrogation of these bible usury laws, they hesitate not to give the lie to the Word of God as well as to the unanimous testimony of history, of the Fathers and Councils of the Church, and of publicists in all ages up to comparatively recent times.

The Westminster Bible Dictionary, drawing, as it thinks, its inspiration from Scripture itself, pronounces the lending of money on interest, though once a forbidden and sinful practice, to be now *no sin*.

I differ entirely from the Dictionary, and will show good and substantial reasons why I differ. The work of the money-lender on interest is a transgression of the law of God, and therefore a *sinful work*; as sinful and destructive now as in the days of Moses, of Jeremiah, of David, of Ezekiel. The Scriptural injunction against usury or interest has its roots stretching away down at the very foundations of human happiness and well-being; the practice of this vice is and has been the ruin of nations; there can be no safety for toil where it is tolerated and practiced; there never has been and never will be any change in human character, circumstance, or condition to call for the abrogation or relaxation of the Bible laws against usury; and there is not so much as the shadow of a word in all Scripture to justify what Presbyterianism sets forth as its creed with regard to lending on interest.

As I said before, I have no fault to find with these works except as to the passages before us. In all other respects I accord them the praise they deserve.

Let us now quote.

Page 514.—“Usury.—This word, which now means the lending of money at extortionate interest, meant at the time of the translation of our authorized version, *any* interest or sum paid for the use of money. Hence, ‘mine own with usury’ (Luke xix. 23) means ‘mine own with interest.’ (For the laws respecting interest among the Hebrews see loan.)”

Page 321.—“Loan.—The law strictly forbade any interest to be taken for a loan to any poor person. The prohibition was afterwards limited to the Hebrews, from whom, of whatever rank, not only was no usury on any pretence to be exacted, but relief to the poor by way of loan was enjoined, and excuses for evading this duty were forbidden. (Ex. xxii. 25; Lev. xxv. 35, 37; Deut. xv. 3, 7-11; xxiii. 19, 20.) As commerce increased, the practice of usury and so also of suretyship grew up; but the exactation of it from a Hebrew appears to have been regarded to a late period as discreditable. The money-changers, who had seats and tables in the temple, were traders whose profits arose chiefly from the exchanges of money with those who came to pay their annual half shekel.”

The Dictionary informs its readers that the law prohibiting the lending of money on interest “was afterwards limited to the Hebrews.” The statement is utterly untrue, and has not the shadow of proof to support it. And yet, what a price the world has paid, in human guilt and suffering, for the perilous doctrine of the commentators.

The first time the law is announced is in Exodus xxii. 25: “If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.” This commandment was given from the mouth of God to Moses and Aaron on Mount Sinai. It was afterwards repeated to Moses with somewhat more amplitude when God spake to him “out of the tabernacle of the congregation.” These are the words (Lev. xxv. 35-37): “And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or increase; but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.”

Here the prohibition distinctly includes not only the Hebrews but also the strangers and sojourners. Not but that the law did from the outset embrace all. It is to apply equally in all its parts to Hebrew, sojourner, and stranger. No distinction is to be drawn or allowed. The prohibition, instead of suffering limitation (if we admit that originally there *was* a limitation), is now extended so as to embrace all, the strangers and sojourners being thus identified with the Hebrews as brethren. And mark the design of it all—“that thy brother may live with thee.” The law assumes *poverty* as the ground of borrowing, because it properly judged that nobody would borrow unless he were needy. And it forbade it to all because it is an oppression of labor and all, rich and poor, must live by labor. And as it is only the toiler who produces, the borrowing, if done exclusively through the rich, must still fall with grinding and destructive force upon the toilers, even upon the poor, made poor by this very vice of usury; the interest cannot be paid by the rich as rich, but only by these poor as toilers and producers.

What does the sentence, “That thy brother may live with thee,” remind us of, but the fact that this lending on interest has disinherit ed the toiling world, that we see everywhere trouble and unrest, and that men need not expect to live in peace together where it prevails? The present-day ominous heavings and commotions of human society are evident warnings of the truth of God’s word and of the permanence of these laws. This is the root trouble of the whole.

In Deut. xxiii. 19, 20, the prohibitions against lending on interest are repeated, but with this sentence in addition: “Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury.”

Here, say these Dictionaries, is the warrant for our statement that there is nothing radically wrong in lending on usury, and that all nations may now engage in the practice without contravening the Word of God.

Setting aside all economic considerations, we have to place over against this notion the entire spirit, force, and drift of Scripture language. Wherever it is spoken of, money lending on usury is set forth as a mean, degrading, and destructive vice, ruinous to the soul as well as to the national life, a sentiment the echo of which has come down through all the ages. In addition to what is said in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, we need only point in proof to the passages where usury is referred to in the Psalms, Nehemiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah. We do not envy the money lender who can read, without the most serious misgivings, the 17th chapter of Ezekiel. Neither do we envy these commentators their intelligence or their piety if they can read the 15th Psalm, and then calmly sit down to teach people that usury may be practised on some men and not on others, or that "modern progress" is justified in sweeping the law entirely out of Scripture. To do so is to mutilate Scripture, morality, and humanity at a stroke.

But we have passages which give an ample key to the interpretation of this permissive clause as to lending to strangers, and which show that the prohibition against lending on usury to stranger or sojourner has not in the least degree been abrogated or weakened.

Moses, in Deut. xxiv. 1, commands the Hebrews, if determined to put away their wives for trivial causes, to give them a written bill of divorce, so as to throw at least some shield of legal protection around the injured woman. And Christ himself gives us the true interpretation why Moses permitted this thing to be done: "because of the hardness of their hearts." Unrestrained hardness of heart drew out the permissive law as to divorce—unrestrained covetousness of heart drew out the permissive clause as to usury. Is not divine wisdom fully illustrated here? Does Moses, in all this, weaken by one iota the sanctity of the marriage vow? That sanctity, and the law which recognizes and shields that sanctity, are unalterable. But there is a provision made which regulates to some extent the evils flowing from that hardness of heart which was bent on taking its own course of gratifying its appetite, and in utter disregard of the sufferings entailed on the innocent victim. If, on the ground that Moses permitted of lending on usury to strangers, we disregard the sanctity of the laws against usury, why may we not, on the ground of Moses permitting the putting away of wives, disregard the sanctity of the marriage vow? The cases are exactly parallel.

So of the permissive usury clause. If you are determined, says the law, to exercise your covetousness in this way in spite of positive injunctions, then make the stranger, not your Hebrew brother, the victim. No license here to lend on usury, but a restraint (mark, an actual restraint) on covetous desires which were determined to be gratified, and which, we may be sure, would not have spared either Hebrew or foreigner.

The commentators speak of usury being limited to the Hebrews in the sense of the practice itself being commended and approved to others. The force of the Bible statements is entirely the other way. As in the case of divorce, the permissive clause must be regarded as a restraint, and probably the only one possible in the circumstances, upon the covetousness which prompts men to endeavor to gather in without toil out of the labor of others. So far, then, it is a confirmation, and an exceedingly strong one at that, of the law against usury.

We are further fortified in this belief by the case (Deut. xiv. 21) of selling diseased flesh, which the Hebrews were permitted to do to aliens if they were determined to make merchandise of it. Here a thing was permitted to be done which no one will deny is radically wrong—the selling of animals which had died from disease. So far as the act itself is concerned, the permission to sell to aliens no more justifies the selling of diseased meat than the permission of lending on usury to the strangers justifies the taking of usury. We arrive, then, at a principle that a thing which it is sinful to do is both permitted to be done and the act or procedure in the doing of it regulated by divine law. But it does not follow that the responsibility of the violation of the law is at all lessened, or the law itself set aside and abrogated. The integrity of the law is not touched, even

with a pin's point. These permissive clauses have reference to men's unbridled lusts, and to nothing more.

Again, we are repeatedly admonished to have *one law* for the Hebrew as well as for the stranger. The latter had as much right to the use of the tithes of every third year as the Levite himself. He was not to be oppressed in any way. "In every good thing" given by God, the Hebrew, the Levite, and the stranger were equally to share and rejoice. The judgment of the stranger was not to be perverted. The Hebrews were enjoined to remember that they had been bondmen. There is a touching passage in Exodus xxii. 21: "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." In Deut. xix. 11, the stranger is identified with all the Hebrew laws, and enters into covenant and oath with one and all before God. He was to hear and to do all the words "of this law," and to obey it to the uttermost.

That usury is in its nature a curse is proved not only by the laws of economy, but by the direct testimony of the word of God. We need hardly refer to the original Hebrew word itself, though it carries a world of meaning in it—"to bite." This *curse* shall come upon thee, says God to the nation, as the fruit of disobedience; *strangers shall lend on usury to thee*; just as in case of obedience, you shall have such abundance that you will never need to borrow, and this curse shall fall from thy hand on other nations. If it be a curse when applied by the strangers to the Hebrews, how could it prove a blessing when applied from the Hebrews to the strangers? Could it be poison when flowing from stranger to Hebrew, and a healing medicine when flowing from Hebrew to strangers? Could "the bite" of this wolf of usury be hurtful to the Hebrew, but a pleasant and healthy thing for the foreigner? Never. The virus is the same in every place and in every age. Usury can no more change its character than the leopard its spots. It is not confined to the simple and obvious act of direct money-lending. The taint is there and the vice reigns wherever men draw in their dividends without toil, and keep their "capital" intact. It is *usury* that is the thing forbidden by God, and not simply or alone the usury of money.

Now, then, if the principle of alleged limitation refer to a prohibition only of lending by a Hebrew to a Hebrew, why are not these commentators consistent, and denounce the money-lending by an Englishman to an Englishman, a Scotchman to a Scotchman, a Frenchman to a Frenchman, an American to an American? How is it that the Presbyterian Board can denounce the lending on interest between Jew and Jew, and be silent as the grave when it is a question of lending between "brother Scots?" Is a Scotchman, like his native thistle, bristling so with dogmatic spines that the Board can venture to hide from him what, according to its own showing, is flagrant transgression of God's law? Surely Presbyterianism is entitled to all the good things of Judaism. If the prohibition of usury was a good thing for the Hebrews, how comes it that the Presbyterian Board not only discards the blessing, but takes the curse, usury itself, under its wing? It is, indeed, a strange sort of motherhood. Is it that the Board dare not face the economies of the question (for we have not even a hint of what is being read and well understood by millions of working men on that score) that it just shuts its eyes, closes its bible, takes a *salto mortale*, and falls back on Acts of the eighth Henry, "of blessed memory"? The commentators frequently attempt to justify modern usury or interest on the ground, as they say, that these laws were intended for an agricultural and not for a commercial community. It is an idle notion. Usury or interest can come out of nothing but labor, and if its tendency is to ruin agricultural labor, it must ruin every form of labor. Have we any evidence of its repeal to suit the extensive commerce carried on under the reign of Solomon? If it ruins agricultural labor, how can it prove a blessing to the labor necessary in moving the products of agriculture? In what nation can you point to it as a curse to the tillers in the fields but as a blessing to the toilers in the workshop? Wherever and whenever it is practised, there its ruinous influence is felt in every department of labor. Wherever usury reigns, the great and righteous doctrine of industrial equivalents is destroyed, and hence Scripture condemns it as *essentially unrighteous*.

The word usury, says the Board, which now means the lending of money at extortionate interest, meant at the time of the translation of our authorized version, any interest, a sum paid for the use of money. We submit that this is not the sort of language in which this thing should be presented. Its direct effect is to throw the reader off his guard. The meaning of the word to-day is just the same as it was when God spake from Sinai, *any increase*. It will never have any other meaning, for it can never bear any other meaning. That meaning is now corrupted in commercial circles so as to cloak the true character of usury, a gloss which the Board apparently approves, or, at any rate, finds no words to condemn.

The construction of the Scripture sentences confirms our view of usury: "Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury." Mark the relation of these two sentences, and the condemnation of usury implied in the words italicized.

One may well feel surprised at what he occasionally reads or hears as to the parable of the talents. It is not uncommon to hear this parable quoted as if it actually approved the vice of usury. The parable no more teaches the people such a vice than the parable of the unrighteous judge teaches the people the practice of unrighteousness, or that of the unjust steward the practice of cooking accounts.

We have no faith in the Board's drastic principle of interpretation. The law, it says, was at first a general law forbidding usury—afterwards it became a limited law, and had no reference to anybody but Hebrews. Now even that limitation is set aside, and the law which formerly read, Thou shall not lend, now reads: Everybody may lend on usury and take his pound of flesh when and where he can. And so our modern interpreters pave this broad road to moral, national, and industrial ruin with plausible conjectures and notions as silly as they are thoughtless. Lending money on interest destroyed labor and swept away the fruits of labor in the time of the Jews. It does so still. These economic laws are unalterable and inexorable. You cannot place the Christian and the Jew under different systems of political economy. These laws are for man, not for this or that particular nation or community.

Mark where all this leads to. Scripture language perverted—the law of God rendered of non-effect—the very thing condemned in the plainest and strongest language approved and countenanced by these commentators—and the church deluded into the belief that it may do, without sin, what the word of God utterly forbids and condemns!

Obedience to this law is linked (Psalm xv.) with the stern and unbending virtues of the Christian life. There is an unrepealed sentence of death against the money lender. (Ezekiel xviii.) These Bible laws were endeavored to be set aside by English Acts of Parliament passed in reigns of kings not quite exemplary as regards their morals. The Presbyterian Board of Publication draws its inspiration, not from the word of God, but from these parchment Acts of the pure and clean-handed Henry the Eighth and his compeers. A mercenary age demands that even the word of the living God shall give way before it. Presbyterianism belies its proud and ancient spirit, consents to the deep humiliation, and yields its once unbending neck to the yoke. Can it be that such a church is now speechless over the stupendous wrongs of labor? Alas! it is even so.

Usury is in its nature a curse, and unchangeably so, because it takes from its victims, and never makes returns. It preserves its principal, and sweeps all profits out of the toilers' hands. And the endless and unmitigated rigor of its curse to our race lies in this—that it compels industry not only to create all its products, but to toil a second time over the *use* of all its products. The commentators are bound to know the economies of these questions. Tens of thousands of working men are reading up and far outstripping them. Wherever the taint of usury is found, there is sin and transgression of God's law, it matters not by what round-about road the *increase* may reach you, or by what modern artifice of "business" it may be hid from view. The law is

founded on the great economic principle that there can be no increase without personal toil ; that is, of course, an increase for which you can demand a return from others' toil ; and the peril of the transgression lies in the fact that modern methods tend to conceal the guilt so much from observation. The Scriptures hold that usury (not usury only as related to money, but *all* usury) is in its nature subversive of human rights and destructive of labor, facts which recent investigations of labor reformers have amply proved. It comes to this—is God's grand economy to reign? or are men's weak, silly and perverted notions to prevail?

The modern world profoundly thanks the modern Church for its modern interpretation. It can desire no better friends than the commentators. But the never-to-be-repealed Divine law stands there in all its majesty and integrity. The world will come back to its ancient belief. "The statutes of the Lord are right." But let us think of the thousands of pious and simple souls who are but too glad to take these commentators at their word, and who thus jeopardize their peace and prospects for this life and the life to come. Truly, there is an awful responsibility.

What I said as to these great bible laws many years ago will bear repetition here : "The more I reflect on the passage, (Deut. xxiii, 19), the more do I see that it embodies the greatest truths in political economy. Industry and commerce will yet accept of these principles in all their integrity. On no other foundation will society ever be able to rear a lasting and comely structure." A New Catechism on Political Economy, p. 67.

We labor reformers are often charged with being Utopians, if not something worse. Let us see what sort of Utopia the commentators have introduced. Look into it, and blush for shame. Communism and Socialism of the worst character, one commercial giant suddenly falling and dragging down thousands to ruin—panics and public disorders—strikes, lock-outs, and feuds without end—millionaires and paupers side by side—discontentment—slay-killers of human beings honored, and red-handed men publicly decorated without so much as a word of protest from you, though it is a sight sufficient to make the nation tremble to its very centre—a boundless mercenary spirit—despotism that will not be rebuked—industry continuously drained of its resources—children inured to hard toil in their tender years, sacrificed to your Moloch of gain—great factories with all their demoralization of youth—shoddy and sham on every hand—poverty confronting you in every direction—men toiling on for ever in hopelessness and despair—class threatening class—bankruptcy in a short cycle of years ever devouring the traders and commerce of the land—anxiety stamped on every brow—none satisfied—a hopeless world driven to drown its sorrows in strong drink—the lands destined by God for a nation's inheritance and life tossed to the greedy speculator by the million acres without a moment's compunction on the part of your rulers—the legitimate rewards of labor constantly snatched from the toilers' hands—a commercial system which is the gambler's paradise—the Church tied hand and foot—the poor struggling to live in a world of plenty, the rich struggling to be richer still—a daily press all but a unit in its bitter hostility to human rights and in its determination to suppress human liberty—and in presence of it all *your pulpits silent and indifferent as the clods of the valley.* These are the fruits of usury, and this is the Utopia of the commentators. Who are the fanatics—the men who are content to sit down amidst all this garbage? Or the earnest, thoughtful, restless men who are doing their best to find a way out of it? O, that the pulpits of the land would but find a tongue!

Montreal, 15th April, 1881.

## THE INTEREST QUESTION.

PIERCING THE FALLACIES THAT SEEK TO JUSTIFY USURY-TAKING.—NATURE'S FORCES AS A FACTOR.—ENTERING INTO EVERY ACTION, FREE TO ALL, THEY DO NOT COUNT, AND ARE NO ALLY OF THE USURER.—HUMAN EXERTION THE ONLY MEASURE.—INDUSTRY CANNOT BOTH TOIL FOR ITS PRODUCTS AND PAY FOR THEIR USE.—WE CHARGE FOR LABOR—NOT TIME.—DO UNTO OTHERS AS YE WOULD BE DONE BY—GIVE EQUIVALENTS FOR EQUIVALENTS, FAVOR FOR FAVOR, BUT NOTHING MORE.—REVIEWING “PROGRESS AND POVERTY.”

[AN EXAMINATION INTO HENRY GEORGE's APOLOGY FOR INTEREST AS SET FORTH IN CHAPTERS III. AND V. OF HIS WORK. CHAPTER III., INTEREST AND THE CAUSE OF INTEREST ; CHAPTER V., THE LAW OF INTEREST.]

Montreal, May, 1881.

A FEW days since I took up for the first time the work by Mr. George on “Progress and Poverty.” I read rapidly through about 150 pages with great delight and satisfaction. So far I agreed with almost every word. Great was my regret, then, when I came to his chapters on Rent and Interest, for there I was reluctantly compelled to part company with the author. I felt all the more disappointment because I could not but admire the tact and ability with which he had so far handled his argument.

Mr. George justifies Rent and Interest.

I justify neither.

I propose in this review to examine into the two chapters which embrace his views as to Interest, and to state my reasons why I differ from him.

Various causes of Interest seem to be running through the author's mind. He says that money, if put away, will not increase, but that wine, if put away, will have improved in quality at the end of the year and have increased in value. Or bees are set out, and at the end of the year, we will have more swarms and also the honey made. Or sheep, hogs, or cattle, may be turned out on a range, and you will have at the end of the year all the increase in weight. Here, then, is the secret source of interest. He holds that it is these “vital elements of nature,” something “distinct and separable from labor—the active power of nature—the principle of growth and reproduction,” which give birth to interest and which constitute its active cause.

Now, it appears to me certain that Mr. George is here seeking for a distinction without a difference. The poor wine must just be classed with unfinished or poorly made commodities. The active and independent “forces of nature” were just as potentially at work in forming the skin which the shoemaker is manipulating into a pair of shoes, as in the settling of the wine in the hogshead or in the churning of buttermilk in the churn. The forces of nature were powerfully at work in the formation of every particle of wood and iron which goes to make up the carpenter's plane, just as they are at work in the process of tanning and steeping the hides, or in the raising of the baker's batch over night. But the toil of the baker, the tanner, the wine-grower, the shepherd, the apiarist, the farmer, the churner, must all be paid for on the same principle, the expenditure of human

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**labor, meaning by human labor all that is ordinarily and properly embraced in that broad and ample term. There is so much human labor in the wine, so much in the leather, so much in the moving of the plane, so much in keeping and attending to bees, and so forth. And in exchanging all or any of these it is certain that neither party ever begins to calculate anything about the vital forces of nature which can neither be reckoned nor commercially exchanged, and which are all equally gratuitous to every man.**

Again, Mr. George declares that it is the lapse of time which is the element that brings forth interest. “It springs from the element of time—the difference of a year between the lending and return of the plane.” There is no reason, he says, why a man who borrows a plane should return more than as good a plane at the year’s end, because the plane is useless, neither increasing nor growing between the time of laying it down at night and resuming work next morning. So far with regard to the plane. But now, he says, if a calf is lent, a cow should be returned at the end of the year. James lends a calf to William—William must return a cow to James. But this is all fallacious. For the calf developed into a cow, or rather a growing heifer, represents William’s toil for the year, just as the work done with the plane represents the carpenter’s toil for the year. Calves and cows, grain and trees, are not reared of themselves—those who have had them through hand know that well; they all require constant care and attention, and it is the human labor embraced in it all that is paid for. This alleged economic distinction between planes and calves is purely imaginary. Interest cannot spring out of anything of that kind. If a calf becomes a cow, a gold dollar remains a gold dollar.

In exchanging a commodity, can you make a charge for *time*? If your checker keeps the time of workingmen, surely you are not so silly as to think they are selling you time or that you are paying for time. If a laborer does a week’s work for you in sowing grain, do you pay him for the time he is sleeping or when the corn is springing over nights? or do you pay him for his labor during the day? If you can make somebody pay you for the lapse of time when you are sleeping, how are you to get paid for the lapse of time when you are awake and working? And is not the *growth* a free gift to you? How can you charge for the time corn or trees take to grow? Can you sell days, minutes, months or years?

Mr. George quotes the illustration used by Bastiat in his defence of capital and justification of interest, and shows with consummate skill and clearness how thoroughly that defence breaks down when submitted to critical examination. I came to the same conclusion many years ago when I first read Bastiat. The usurious press is never weary of quoting the brilliant Frenchman. His style is so fascinating, and he handles his subject with such perfect confidence and shew of strength, that he must be no ordinary capitalist indeed who is able to cast all that aside and look beneath the hollow mask.

The illustration is this: James, a carpenter, makes himself a plane in 10 days. It will last 290 of the 300 working days of the year. Another carpenter, William, offers to borrow the plane, and return at the end of the year a new plane equally good. James objects to this on the ground that he would get no advantage from such a contract. William, admitting this, agrees to give the new plane at the year’s end, and one plank, “which represents interest.” James again lends the new plane, and repeats the transaction each year. Had William not borrowed but taken the first 10 days of the year to make himself a plane, each at the end of the year, supposing one plank the fruit of a day’s work, would have had 290 planks, William no plane on the last day of the year, as his would be worn out that day, and James a new plane made by him during the last 10 days of the year. James would be making planks and William a plane the first 10 days—William planks and James a plane the last 10 days. On 31st December each with 290 planks, James with a plane, William with no plane. If the borrowing had been as at first proposed by William the situation would have been the same—William would have consumed the last 10 days in making the new plane to return to James in order to replace the one he had worn out.

Now, a most important point to notice here is this. If the borrowing had been as proposed by William—simply the return of the plane in as good condition, or say returning a new one—would James have lost anything which he would otherwise have gained? Mr. George shows that he would not, and so far he gives to labor reformers an argumentative tower of strength. James at best, had there been no lending, would have had 290 planks and a new plane on Dec 31st—by lending the plane simply for the return of a new plane, and by employing the first 10 days of the year in making himself another plane, he has exactly the same result, 290 planks and a new plane on Dec. 31. Out of William's labor James neither loses nor gains. And William would have gained nothing to the loss of James, for at the end of the year he would have 290 planks and no plane. So far it is pretty much a question of the *capability* of human labor.

Of course the truth involved here—and a very deep and important truth it is—is that the 10 days labor of making a plane at the end of December is the exact equivalent, *the exact labor balance*, of making a plane in ten days at the beginning of the year.

And now let me quote a passage well worthy of being transcribed into these columns :

"But when, in addition to the return of a plane, a plank is given, James at the end of the year will be in a better position than if there had been no borrowing, and William in a worse. James will have 291 planks and a new plane, and William 289 planks and no plane. And if William keeps on borrowing of James on the same terms, is it not evident that the income of the one will progressively decline, and that of the other will progressively increase, until the time will come when, as the result of the original lending of a plane, James will obtain the whole result of William's labor—that is to say, William will become virtually his slave?"

Now, this is exactly the issue before the Christian world. This is the question which fills labor reformers with so much fear and anxiety. This is the root of the Nihilism and despair which are threatening to rend society in pieces. This usurious and devouring spirit, this simple lending on interest of the plane by a man who happens to have got, say, ten days ahead of his fellow-toiler, this is it which modern society sanctions and defends, but which is crowding the race every day with heavier and heavier pressure down to slavery and ruin. This is why we are in great earnestness about these problems. This is the world's peril, and let us be thankful that the world is beginning to see it.

M. Bastiat claimed that the essential thing lent by James to William was the power which exists in the tool to increase the productiveness of labor. Mr. George shows this to be a fallacy. Is it not this, he says, which is the basis of interest. For to suppose so would be "to suppose the making and using of planes a trade-secret or patent-right, when the illustration would be one of monopoly, not of capital." There is nothing then, he adds, in this illustration to show that interest is equitable or natural. So far good, very good.

But our author holds, nevertheless, that interest is natural and equitable. He takes a different line of proof from Bastiat. Let us see if it will stand examination.

He calls upon the forces of nature to afford him an argument and thinks he has found there the true source of usury or interest. I have already referred to what he sets forth as to lapse of time, and the development of calves into cows, seeds into trees, and so forth. The following quotation expresses his view of the matter :—

"Or, if we suppose that the ten days labor (of making the plane) had been devoted to planting corn, it is evident that James would not have been fully compensated if at the end of the year he had received so much planted corn, for during the year the planted corn would have germinated and grown and multiplied; and so if the plane had been devoted to exchange, it might during the year have been turned over several times, each exchange yielding an increase to James. Now, therefore, as James' labor might have been applied in any of those ways—or, what amounts to the same thing, some of the labor devoted to making planes might be

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thus transferred—he will not make a plane for William to use for the year unless he gets back more than a plane. And William can afford to give back more than a plane, because the same general average of the advantages of labor applied in different modes will enable him to obtain from his labor an advantage from the element of time. It is this general averaging, or, as we may say, 'pooling' of advantages which necessarily takes place where the exigencies of society require the simultaneous carrying on of the different modes of production, which gives to the possession of wealth, incapable in itself of increase, an advantage similar to that which attaches to wealth used in such a way as to gain from the element of time. And in the last analysis the advantage which is given by the lapse of time springs from the generative force of nature and the varying powers of nature and of man. Were the quality and capacity of matter everywhere uniform, and all productive power in man, there would be no interest."

All this is utterly fallacious. Time cannot be sold. Its "corroding tooth" inevitably devours all which has been formed and fashioned by the hand of man. "Turning over" planes yields nothing. Take, say, another plane, a perfect equivalent; turn over the two, exchange them; where is there any increase yielded? It is only buying a thing or selling a thing. *Sale* yields nothing; *purchase* yields nothing. Because John and Tom exchange rice and hats or nails and shoes, is there something involuntarily separated for the pocket of Henry, the money-lender? There must be if Mr. George is correct.

If it be true that it is the lapse of the ten days which creates interest, then it follows that the labor of ten men to-morrow who do exactly the same labor as the same ten men to-day, are not equivalents. And the ten pairs of shoes made by the ten men to-morrow are not so valuable as the ten pairs made by these men to-day, though they embody exactly the same amount of labor and material. And the ten pairs made the next day again are of still less value. And if they are not equivalents, the ten men of to-morrow should not get paid as much, even if hired men, as the ten men of to-day. There must be a decrease so rapid that man's toil must soon be eaten up, and this is what usury claims. But, on the contrary, it is true that the labor of ten men next week may be the exact equivalent of the labor of ten men last week, and not necessarily either greater or less. And it is also true that the wages paid to men from week to week and from year's end to year's end demonstrate that the week's labor at the end of the year is the exact equivalent of the week's labor at the beginning of the year. And I hold, moreover, that the labor of a thousand men producing a million bushels of wheat in the days of Pharaoh is the exact equivalent of the labor of a thousand men producing a million bushels now. But if Mr. George's doctrine be true, the million of bushels of Pharaoh's time must be of incalculably more value than the million bushels now, for thousands of years have elapsed, and the lapse of time, he holds, is the element out of which interest springs. And I am sure Pharaoh's million, if lent, would have long since devoured all wheat from off the face of the earth. And I hold, furthermore, that if my neighbor helps me with a day's work on Monday, and if I help him with a day's work on Friday, I have fully repaid him, given him labor for labor, value for value; and that if he calls on me to give him a day's labor *and a plank*, he takes from me a plank too much. Here, I hold, is a new and most powerful argument against usury or interest.

If you borrow \$100, and if it be said that the lender has thus done you a service, the service is fully extinguished when you return the hundred dollars, just as the service is balanced when what your neighbor does for you to-day is balanced by what you do for him to-morrow; or say next week's labor for this week's labor. Is the labor of the last week in the month less than the labor of the first week in the month because two weeks' time came between? Your hundred dollars become mine, and anon my hundred dollars become yours; just as last week your labor became mine, and this week my labor becomes yours. The hundred dollars lent to you is nothing different from the week's labor I lent to you; the hundred dollars paid back by you is the same as the week's labor paid back by you.

Moreover, there is a production in each of the day's labor or week's labor, but there is not an iota of production in the loan of bits of money, or in the use of money. The lender has done no economic service, no labor to be paid for. He has simply lent you a few hundreds of bits of money, to be returned as lent. In a word, you cannot find the smallest crevice in which to lodge this thing called interest. Whichever way you turn there is a sheer economic precipice before you, where you cannot get a moment's foothold. And the reason of it all may be summed up in this: that industry cannot both toil for its products and pay for the use of its products. Economic law and industrial capacity equally forbid it; the written law of God condemns it, and pronounces the man or the nation who attempts it guilty of a great and serious crime. It is, as this paper points out, the ruin of labor, and that is the ruin of humanity.

Nothing is more certain than that it is lawful for a man to do what he will with his own, so as no injury is inflicted on his neighbor; and nothing is more certain than that it is not lawful for a man to do what he will with that which is another man's. But if it be true that my labor given to you to-morrow is the equivalent of your labor given to me to-day, then nothing is more certain than that the first dollar returned of the \$100 lent, though men call it by the name of interest, is one dollar of the principal returned; and it is absolutely certain that if one takes this dollar and gives no credit for it as part of the principal returned, that man is doing what he will with that which is another man's. Men may *agree* to do this wicked thing, wicked because essentially unrighteous and destructive of labor equivalents, but God and his glorious laws are in eternal conflict with such doings, and his terrible threatenings against this act of lending on usury will never fail. His condemnation is recorded in Scripture, and there it will stand to the end of time.

So far, then, neither time nor natural forces have anything to do with the case. It is a most unphilosophical attempt to drag in the lapse of time as an excuse for exacting interest, for making men give away more labor than they have received, which means giving away labor and receiving nothing. If Mr. George's theories are true, then there is nothing for it but industry to carry its broken heart to the end of time; the millennium for which men hope and pray may be adjourned *sine die*; the *Irish World* may forthwith cast its type and its traps into the Hudson; and we may all follow suit. If *...* be the true doctrine I should never more lift a pen. Truly, life would not be worth living.

The subject is deeply interesting to every thoughtful mind. I will resume it next week.

## THE INTEREST QUESTION.

**REVIEW OF "PROGRESS AND POVERTY" CONTINUED.—THE FORCES OF NATURE NO GAUGE FOR THE USURER.—" ALL I WANT IS MY TOIL ! "—IT IS NOT NATURAL POWERS AND DIVERSITIES, BUT HUMAN LABOR THAT RECKONS.—TIME AS AN ELEMENT IN THE DISCUSSION.—PAY IN ADVANCE OR NOT, THE ONLY QUESTION IS, SHALL AN EQUIVALENT BE GIVEN ?—USURY SOMETHING THAT OUTSTRIPS EVERYTHING.—IT CANNOT BE A RETURN FROM THE INCREASE OF CAPITAL, BECAUSE CAPITAL RATHER WEARS AWAY THAN INCREASES.—LABOR FOR LABOR THE JUST STANDARD.—ARE MEN TO BE PAID FOR PRODUCTION OR NON-PRODUCTION—FOR WORK OR IDLENESS ?**

MONTRÉAL, May, 1881.

**MR. GEORGE** says that interest would be abolished, it would not exist at all, were matter everywhere uniform in quality and capacity, and were all the productive power lodged in man. If this be true, it must follow that interest arises because trees, and grain, and calves—in short, all nature's products—grow whilst we are dining, or supping, or sleeping. Now, I submit that this should be about the last reason in the world why any man should put his hand in his neighbor's pocket and extract so many coins in name of interest. For these coins are the products of man's labor ; and if ten pieces are taken away from him out of every hundred he earns, he is short in his labor, and the fruits of his toil are reduced by so much. But if this new doctrine be true, the money-lender is entitled to say, "I must have ten pieces out of that hundred, because the forces of nature were at work in depositing gold in the mine, and you used nature's forces more or less in getting it out of the mine." The producer might reply, "I did not know that usurers had bought up all these forces, or that they had established a monopoly over them. Pray take out your share of the 'forces,' or all you own of these 'forces,' but leave the gold to me. All I want is my toil. And surely so sensible a man as your lordship must know that there can be no equivalent or relation in exchange between nature's forces and a poor fellow's toil."

Interest arises, says Mr. George, because matter is diversified, and is not uniform ; were it all on a dead level there would be no interest. We are to believe, then, that interest exists because some things are hard and some soft, some tall and some short, some sweet and some bitter, some hot and some cold, some dense and some rare, some light and some heavy, some filling more space, some less space, and so on. It is because of these things that the usurer demands his eight or ten per cent. of return for money or "capital." Now, surely the borrower has as good a right to claim, *on such grounds*, ten per cent. from the lender as the lender from the borrower. If the man who lends you a thousand dollars in gold can claim interest from you on the ground that it is a different material, say, from your silver, surely you are as well entitled to make the claim on the ground of your silver being different from his gold.

The want of uniformity, this diversity in nature, in quality, capacity, form, and everything else, clothes our world with beauty, and fills the eye of man with never-ending delight. It is certainly to introduce it to a new use to set it forth as an apology for interest. Our author is easy of belief if he thinks interest would be

abolished were *all* productive power lodged in man. The usurer is not so easily balked of his prey. It seems to me he would make it an excuse for descending upon it with more fell swoop than ever.

"Interest," he adds, "does not arise from the fact that there are people who will gladly pay for the use of one's thousand dollars if they cannot get it in any other way, but from the fact that the capital which my thousand dollars represents has the power of yielding an increase to whoever has it, even though he be a millionaire." Place this statement over against his previous declaration: "The essential thing which James loaned to William was not the increased power which labor acquires from using planes. To suppose this we should have to suppose that the making and using of planes was a trade secret or a patent-right, when the illustration would become one of monopoly, not of capital." This last is a clear and admirable statement, but how are we to reconcile it with his subsequent position as to interest? If the increased power acquired by labor in using planes be not the essential thing lent, how can it be said, in terms absolutely contradictory, that interest arises out of the fact that capital has the power of yielding an increase to whoever has it? With one breath it is said that the essential thing borrowed by William is *not* increase of power yielded by the plane, and in the next breath that interest arises out of the increased power yielded by this capital, this plane, to whoever has it. It is clear, then, on the ground of the first statement, that if I pay interest to James on the supposition that I have an increase of power from the plane, I am paying for a myth; it is equally clear, on the ground of the second statement, that if I pay interest to James on the supposition that I have increased power from the plane, I am paying for a reality. And surely there is no one bold enough to deny that "increase," as the reward of labor, is from the hand of toil, not from the hand of idleness—from the hand of the worker, be he borrower or non-borrower, not from the hand of the non-producer, be he capitalist or non-capitalist.

Mr. George says the essential thing which James loaned to William was "the use of the concrete result of ten days' labor." James did not loan anything of the kind. The use of the result of the ten days' labor is the toiler's alone. The essential thing James lent was just a plane, and nothing but a plane; and the essential thing to be returned, the true and real industrial equivalent, is a plane and nothing but a plane, or the value of a plane. You won't make any more of it, though you think your brains away.

"Interest is not properly a payment made for the use of capital, but a return accruing from the increase of capital." Capital never increases. Money, tools, goods, instead of increasing, all gradually wear away. So that interest cannot be found in a thing which has no existence. I have made all this plain in my recent papers on the land question, so I need not here recapitulate.

It is further alleged that interest includes all returns for the use of capital, whether borrowed or not—that when, for example, you work *with your own spade*, you have a return of interest equivalent in its nature to what the money lender draws out of labor under the name of interest. There is no truth in it. That nature, as it were, works to your hand, everybody knows. But that this work, gratuitous and free to all, is identical with usury or increase drawn by an idler for the loan of money, or of anything produced by toil, is not true in the remotest degree. As an economic truth, what you receive as a worker is the reward of your work. If the product be the return, the offset, the balancing of my toil, then there can be no reward for the lending, or to the lender, of a plane, for there is no toil from a lender's hand, and therefore nothing to divide or make over, no product in existence at all. If product be the reward of toil, then product, it is clear, cannot be given to a lender of planes or of capital. Whether planes should be lent, or may be lent, are outside questions. That users of planes should use their own planes is beyond question, and that industry is perfectly capable of making its own planes, is also beyond question, for there is nothing but industry

to make them. And if carpenters have to borrow and pay for the use or consumption of all planes or tools, even though it be at the rate of but a plank each year, then a process is set at work which will in the end eat all carpenters out of house and home, as Mr. George himself has so conclusively shown in his discussion of Bastiat's "plane" argument. If planes must be made before they can be used, the attempt of carpenters to have the use of them before making them will end in ruin. That is to say, this ruin awaits them if, instead of devoting ten days to make a plane at the beginning of the 300 working days during which the plane is assumed to last, they begin to make planks with borrowed planes, and devote ten days at the end of the year to make a new plane for the lender, and also hand over a portion of the fruits of their toil as interest. Trace the work for a few years, and you will find that it does not take long to drain all planks out of the carpenters' hands, and also to leave them without planes or tools. This principle of usury in full play in a community is simply the broad road to ruin for the toilers. The first year's payment is the beginning of a gulf which widens and widens till it swallows up all. I have known of cases in this Province where entire farms have been finally lost to the owners through the original loan on interest of a few bushels of wheat. In fact, once admit this principle of usury to be right, and you cannot stop its progress. It would be wrong to do so, for if it be an economic principle it has both the right and the power to devour all upon which it can lay its hands. How expressive, how truly forcible, are the words of Agur—"The horseleach hath two daughters crying Give, give,"—a meagre but a terrible vocabulary, pointing at once to insatiate desire and to ruined labor. Such is usury. It pauses not a moment, night or day, in its insatiable demands. Its mouth is ever open. The ruin of industry is its object. It stands at the elbow of every workingman, and its ceaseless cry of "Give, give," tells but too truly the fate of a world subject to its sway. Listen, workingmen! Let me assure you that you and your families are concerned about this, yea, mightily concerned. Let my words sink down into your minds.

We must not, in this discussion, lose sight of the fact that James not only gets a new plane from William at the year's end, but also a return in planks for which he has given no labor, and this power of accumulation goes on increasing till he devours all, without the necessity of doing a stroke of work. There is not the least mystery connected with the boundless accumulations of the millionaires. It is only the system in full blast, working out its terrible issues before our eyes, if we will but open our eyes.

When labor is most effective, production is greatest. Were there some law like this applicable to interest, then we would find interest highest in old countries where manufactures are most developed.

"The current political economy," says Mr. George, "has failed to determine the true law of interest." But our author has also failed in the attempt. Just as long ago the current mythology of the day failed to determine the true law of fairies and kelpies. There is as much true law of interest as there is true law of these shadowy creations of the brain.

If lapse of time be an element in the production of interest, every man, woman and child has an equal claim to be paid for it, just as each has a free right to breathe the air of heaven. And this interest must have been produced progressively since man was first placed on the earth, or did the first stroke of work, and its claim never expires. Men may die, families and empires pass away, but this thing, if produced by time, must be as imperishable as time itself, and not only keep pace with it, but far outstrip it in the race. And if, in order to give it existence, we have to assume that the lapse of time must necessarily be associated with human labor, one wonders at the eccentricity of a natural law like this which, instead of throwing the wealth into the hands of the toiling producers, throws it into the hands of a few millionaires. For if interest springs from time, everybody has the same measure of time according to his age, and all at the same age should

be equally rich. And one naturally wonders how some young fellow of fifteen or twenty summers is a millionaire, and some poor fellow of seventy summers, and who has toiled all his life into the bargain, is little better than a pauper. Time must be a mighty bad reckoner, that's sure, or he dispenses his favors on some principle which is a puzzle to me. And it needs no argument to show that a gold sovereign will be a gold sovereign and nothing more though a thousand years should pass over its head, and that it will never grow into a sovereign and a tenth though all Time should be concentrated in the effort and have all the bankers in creation to back it. And if this interest, produced by time, increases in geometrical ratio, doubling itself every few years, then it is plain that old father Time himself must have long since laid down his scythe and been devoured by this unnatural offspring he has brought upon the earth.

If it be true that interest springs out of time, why should there be different rates of interest? Ninety days past are the exact equivalent of ninety days to come. As time, there is no more force in one than in the other. Can you even think of the remotest shade of diversity? Why then should we witness different rates?

When we come to confront all these fine-spun theories with the inexorable logic of truth, what a hideous skeleton is disclosed to view. Here is the bare issue, stripped to the bone: Men are to be paid, not for production, but for non-production—not for working, but for idleness—not for honest labor, but for scheming, gambling, and speculation. Such must ever be the end of all attempts to set up a claim against labor for the tools and appliances it creates and uses in its hands. We can conceive of capitalists making the attempt to bottle up air, and now we see it held that they can bottle up time.

Mr. George treats of the so-called "abstinence" theory of the economists as a productive and accumulative agent. What a contrast is his treatment of this plea to what we have been passing under review! How thorough, clear and explicit is every word. A man like Mr. George must not take up with errors. He has done his best with those he has followed. Such a mind will drop these errors by and by. The "abstinence" theory he has crushed to atoms.

But let us do full justice to the author, and follow him in his reasoning to the end.

He goes on to say that the "interchangeability of wealth necessarily involves an average between all the species of wealth of any special advantage which accrues from the possession of any particular species." This statement would be clearer and more to the point were it made to refer to the average which necessarily falls to the hand of toil through interchangeability of all commodities—that is to say, that human labor on the whole gets an average money return for its work through all departments. And this average, I hold, is not secured to men by the operation of that so-called commercial law of competition which we now witness in operation every day—a law, not of compensation, but of destruction; a tariff of despotic commercial cruelty which conserves this capital, but which persistently bankrupts and destroys *man*, throwing the weak and the unfortunate and even the strong and the resolute to the wall. This healthful average of the rewards of toil will be secured, I say, to our race when true principles are allowed full play, and by the introduction of a law of competition which will be such only in name, and which I may so designate at present for want of a better term—a law which will rule the present destructive industrial and commercial *competition* out of existence, and introduce in its place a general and beneficent law, which we may call *the principle of compensation*, which will secure to every worker the true and full returns for his toil, and prove *competitive* only in so far as it will prevent the man who does no toil from receiving any reward at all, or the man who does light and pleasant work from receiving more than a true and exact return for that work. If commerce and exchange are things destined to be continued among the sons of men, this compensatory law to which I have referred

must be brought into full play in a better ordered state of society and trade ; a sort of true protective tariff for industry ; a law which will ever compensate, never destroy ; which will rule out inequality, but ever render exact justice. And the mighty factor to accomplish all this is the strong, persistent, and prevailing force laid up by the hand of industry itself in the vast mass of the precious metals, a mass whose stable value can now know no change ; where industry enjoys absolute security for its toil ; and which, if men will but withhold their wild schemes, will faithfully render to every man according to his work—a mass which, locked up and hidden away in vaults, is utterly useless to industry, but which, permitted to go freely forth wherever there is a hand to toil, would prove a helper, a protector, and a security to industry in every field of production ; whose *presence*, in short would rule panics paper and credit out of existence and bring the work of the commercial gambler to an end.

Mr. George gives the following examples as proof that "no one will keep capital in one form when it could be changed into a more advantageous form." And I here refer to these examples, not to find any fault with what is quite truthful in the above quotation, but to show that the author, claiming to be a labor reformer, as undoubtedly he is, speaks in language perilous to the last degree, with reference to the great principles of exchange. Let me quote : "No one, for instance, would grind wheat into flour and keep it on hand for the convenience of those who desire from time to time to exchange wheat or its equivalent for flour, unless he could by such exchange secure an increase equal to that which, all things considered, he could secure by planting his wheat."

If this means that the man who is farmer and miller combined should not exchange his flour for fresh wheat without receiving a full equivalent for his past labor, the statement is correct.

But if it means, as it seems to me it does, that the man may receive from his neighbors not only an equivalent in the fruits of their toil in exchange for his toil, but an additional increase for wheat not yet sown or reaped, it would be robbery. The man would be taking and not giving. There would be no exchange at all, simply robbery. If he exchanged a barrel of the flour he had raised and manufactured for five bushels of his neighbor's wheat, and if he said to that neighbor : "You must not only give me these five bushels, the equivalent of the barrel of flour, but you must give me also at this moment as much as I can make by ploughing, sowing, reaping, harvesting, and milling this wheat next season," I ask the reader what name he would apply to such a demand. Is it not a sort of *anticipating* your neighbor's labor into your own pocket, not only without giving any equivalent, but even before he has had time to perform the labor ? If the miller has the right to make such a demand on behalf of his flour, has not his neighbor the same right on behalf of his wheat ? But it is well known that this, under our modern system, is not done, and that what is tantamount to the miller's claim is done on behalf of capital, though done hiddenly.

Again I quote : "No one, if he could keep them, would exchange a flock of sheep now for their net weight in mutton to be returned next year ; for, by keeping the sheep, he would not only have the same amount of mutton next year, but also the lambs and the fleeces." Now, it is plain that the value of that mutton is an equivalent weight in mutton to-day, to-morrow, next year, a thousand years hence. Things of equivalent values are not so because they are produced at the same moment of time. Things of equivalent values may lie a long time unsold in shops ; or the one thing may be produced on Monday, the other thing on Saturday. They are not, on that ground, of unequal values. But if a hundred sheep are exchanged to-day for a money equivalent, can the farmer set up a claim for an additional hundred of one-year-old lambs, with their fleeces and skins ? Would it not be robbery of labor ? If the giving of your flock of sheep for a return of the same next weight of mutton next year would be folly, the exaction in name of interest of fleeces and skins not in existence and of lambs not yet born, would be thievery.

" No one would dig an irrigating ditch unless those who by its aid are enabled to utilize the reproductive forces of nature would give him such a portion of the increase they receive as to make his capital yield him as much as theirs." Say the man digs the irrigating ditch in a week. He uses only a spade, his " capital." What is the equivalent? Is it not an equivalent in human labor from those over whose lands the water flows, or say a week of some one's toil? Is not this an equivalent " irrigating " ditch in the shape of money or some other products of toil sent into the digger's hand? Or is it this—as I fear Mr. George holds—that the digger can now sit down at his ease and draw an eternal revenue from labor for the flow of the water, or for the trifle of a week's work and the wearing away of an infinitesimal portion of steel from the edge of his spade, his capital. What has his capital yielded him, even to put it in that way? An irrigating ditch so many yards long. Could he demand in return a ditch and a half, or two ditches, or a hundred? He is fully paid, fully recouped, when one of his neighbors has given him a week's work or the equivalent of a week's work, or when six of his neighbors have each given him a day's work or the equivalent of a day's work. A return for his capital, for the wearing away of a morsel of steel, he cannot demand, for those who return the equivalent toil to him also wear away their morsel of steel. Usury can find no plea here on its behalf.

I will conclude this review next week.

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## THE INTEREST QUESTION.

REVIEW OF "PROGRESS AND POVERTY" CONCLUDED.—DECREASE, NOT INCREASE, THE CHARACTERISTIC OF ALL SO-CALLED CAPITAL.—NO BROOD FROM BARREN METAL.—THAT WHICH PRODUCES NOTHING CANNOT CLAIM PART OF THAT WHICH IS PRODUCED.—LIVING INTELLIGENCE THE ONLY SOURCE OF INCREASE.—WHEREAS IT IS THOSE WHO NEITHER TOIL NOR SPIN GET THE RESULTS—USUALLY HAS NO PLEA IN THE LAPSE OF TIME.—IF LABOR CAN CLAIM THE BENEFITS OF USE, AND CAPITAL OF INCREASE, WHAT CAN PREVENT ONE DEVOURING THE OTHER?—INDUSTRY LIMITS CAPITAL, NOT CAPITAL INDUSTRY.

MONTREAL, May, 1881.

MR. GEORGE says that in any circle of exchange nature's power of increase must average with all forms of capital, and that therefore he who lends or uses money in exchange or in buying is not deprived of the power to obtain an increase from that money. This is not even partially true—it is wholly false. One has no more right to claim from you for the use of an utterly unproductive thing like money than he has to take out of your pocket on the ground of a ridiculous claim he may set up as to the reproductive powers of nature in growing grain or rearing cattle. No man has the power to obtain increase from bits of money. You cannot, as Aristotle said long ago, take a brood from barren metal. Whenever you use money, you buy; and buying is not producing. So that interest cannot by any possibility spring from that source. The buyer as a buyer produces nothing. The seller as a seller produces nothing. Labor is the source of all.

"Interest is not properly a payment made for the use of capital, but a return accruing from the increase of capital. If the capital did not yield an increase, the cases would be few and exceptional in which the owner would get a premium." Capital never increases, it always decays. Money, buildings, shoes, clothing, ships, tools, grain, flour, hay, machinery, everything moulded by human hands or produced by human toil, inevitably decays and passes away with use and the corroding hand of time. Hence the stupendous injustice of making labor pay for national debts, the very money which was originally lent having, it may be presumed, worn almost entirely away, or, at all events, greatly decreased by use. The factor of increase is wanting, so there can be no usury or interest. If the source dries up, the stream ceases to flow. But this alleged *source* of interest never had existence at all, so where can this thing, this usury, be found? From the moment an article is finished the tooth of time begins its work, and it requires constant and additional toil if we would even keep it up to the mark. An increase will come to the hand of the husbandman as his reward of toil in connection with the grain sown; but grain not in existence is not capital or anything else. And if all capital thus decays and suffers consumption one way or other, how great oppression in compelling the toiling world to pay Interest from generation on an alleged increase which has no existence at all. Increase, is a characteristic of all this so-called capital.

The author endeavors to draw a distinction between what he calls use of things, and benefit from the increase of things. To make a building is to have benefit in the use of these—to put away wine or rear domestic animals, is to have benefit not from use, but from in-

lines are surely too finely drawn. For if benefit arises from increase of wine or grain or animals, why should not benefit arise from increase of planes and ships and steam engines, or from the aid these render every day to the hand of toil? For personal use, a man has no more need for 100 hogsheads of wine than for 100 ships. When we talk of benefit, what personal benefit can a man have from hogsheads of wine which he will never drink, or from ships in which he will never sail, or from dwellings which he will never inhabit? If by benefit we refer to the larger sphere of the word, and include all that man desires to gain, will not benefit come to him in the same way from ships and planes as from grain and wine? I think it is language more than hazardous for an economic writer to say that benefit arises, not from the use, but from the mere increase of wine, corn and animals. What is properly used must be beneficial, but more than the world can use is not beneficial.

And now I meet with a remarkable statement: "Primarily, the benefits which arise from use go to labor, and the benefits which arise from increase to capital." But all labor is exerted for increase; and the whole increase is the reward of labor; and the use or consumption of that increase, of all things made, is gratuitous to the hands which have brought it forth. And if the increase goes to capital and is the reward of capital, how does it happen that it is always found at last in the pockets of men who do no work and who do not contribute a farthing's worth to that increase? If labor can claim the benefits of use and capital the benefits of increase, how could you prevent use and increase from devouring each other? If use ventures to consume anything of the increase, what business has it to do so? If increase ventures upon the domain of use, what right has it there? And how can labor get the use unless it uses the increase? Let us put it to the test: A farmer plants five bushels of potatoes, and houses fifty in the fall. Forty-five bushels is his increase. Increase belongs to capital, we are told. How dare the farmer, then, use a potato of these 45 bushels? And were not the 5 bushels he planted part of the preceding year's increase? What right has he even to the seed? And surely it would be telling the capitalists to fill their bellies with the east wind to inform them that they may have the increase of the potato crop, but not the use of one tuber for their tables. And surely it would be telling the farmers to fill theirs with as cold and cheerless a regimen to say to them that they may have all the use, but not to touch an iota of the increase. And if you say that it is ownership which establishes the claim for all the increase, then that is shifting the whole argument to new ground, and you must reason it out on that new ground. And ownership, as I have frequently shown in these pages, produces nothing; and it is certain that that which produces nothing cannot claim part of that which is produced; just as it is certain that it is human beings, not things, which earn money; *yourself*, not the spade in your hand. Capital may be entitled to the claims put forth on its behalf when you have proved that spades, ploughs, tools, dwellings, money, and so forth, are living intelligences, sentient, reasoning, and responsible creatures. Establish that, and then we may listen to you.

Let us not forget, however, that these arguments are not those of Mr. George alone, but are held by all who believe that capital is entitled to increase. To be consistent they must hold to such notions. I think my readers must begin to perceive how terrible such doctrines are, how utterly ruinous to the human race. Who can overestimate the importance of this great discussion?

I quote from chapter V, The Law of Interest.

"It is manifest that under conditions of freedom the maximum that can be given for the use of capital will be the increase it will bring, and the minimum or zero will be the replacement of capital; for above the one point the borrowing of capital would involve a loss, and below the other capital could not be maintained." This is just Ricardo's withering doctrine of rent which I have fully exposed, on a previous occasion, in these pages. Rent and usury are hydra heads of the same creature which suck the life-blood from industry. Everything above bare life to the lord of the land and to the lender of money! The condition of the toiler tells that nearly all the increase which industry obtains by the use of tools and machin-

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ery, passes out of the hands of industry into hands which neither toil nor spin. A man absolutely without this so-called capital may be said to be one scratching the ground with his fingers and covering in the seed with his feet. Let him rise to the dignity of a spade. All the increase brought between working with the fingers and a spade is destined to fall by means of some imaginary economic law to capital. This is the maximum spoken of above. Capital travels over all the space between the replacing of the spade when worn out and the full increase; and I put it to the reader if this is not making a clean and thorough sweep of industry—as a destroying rain, leaving no food. Is it not a doctrine which reduces man to utter slavery? Does it not say, as plainly as words can tell, "Industry, your doom is settled—above the condition of the most degraded serf you can never rise—all the increase of capital is ours—we cannot tell why we should even have to throw you a bone—we degrade you to the level of the brute, and there you must ever remain."

"Capital," Mr. George says, "does not limit industry, as is erroneously taught, the only limit to industry being the access to natural material. But capital may limit the form of industry and the productiveness of industry by limiting the use of tools and the division of labor." (Wages and Capital, p. 72.) And to prove the transparent heresy involved in the latter part of this quotation he proceeds to urge that without the factory there could be no factory operatives; without the sewing machine no machine sewing; without the plough no ploughing; all which, so far as it proves that capital limits the form and productiveness of industry, might just as well be taken to prove that we will never be drowned in the sea if we don't embark on it, or that a supply of good fresh air limits our capacity of breathing. He adds: "It is also as clear that the want of tools must greatly limit the productiveness of industry." And yet the doctrine he seeks to establish is this—that it is the capital, the very presence of capital, which limits the form and productiveness of industry. But capital (the tools and appliances of industry) never limits but always enlarges the sphere of labor. The reader will excuse me if I quote what I wrote on this point some years since: "Were the proposition or theorem of Mr. Mill true, that industry is limited by capital, then there never would have been any capital. To say that industry is limited by the very things it fashions is manifestly absurd. If any philosophic statement is really necessary on the subject I would reverse the theorem of Mr. Mill and say that *capital is limited by industry*, that whatever is yielded or has been yielded by industry may be assumed as having had its limits clearly defined by industry itself." (The Claims of Capital Considered, p. 5.)

Mr. George urges that it is not the increased efficiency given to labor by adapting capital to special forms of toil which fixes this maximum of interest, but the average power of increase which belongs to capital generally. And to prove his point he says that if the Indians, before the invention of bows and arrows, could kill a buffalo a week, but that after such invention they can kill one a day, the difference would not all belong to the capitalist of the tribe who invented and who monopolized all the bows and arrows. Or that capital invested in a woollen factory will not yield to the capitalist the difference between the produce of the factory and what was formerly obtained by means of spinning-wheel and hand loom. And so of the use of planes, etc. He adds—"the progress of knowledge has made the advantage in the use of planes a common property, and power of labor. What William gets from James is merely such advantage as the element of a year's time will give to the possession of so much capital as is represented by the plane."

What do facts prove as to the reliability of these statements? Just the reverse of what Mr. George would have us believe. Has he not told us, and told us correctly, that the inevitable issue of the plane-borrowing is slavery for William? Has he not claimed that all the benefits of increase go to capital? Has this progress of knowledge really handed over to the toilers the advantages involved in the use of capital? Has this advantage really become a common property and power of labor? Is it not the opposite—the advantages become the common property and

power of capital? If these doctrines were true, would we see the laboring world in the condition it is now in? Would we witness strikes, and commotions and heart-burnings on every hand? Was not the hand-loom weaver better off and more truly independent in former days than the factory "hand" is now? Do not these notions falsify his own theories? For if the returns of capital be the increase that its employment yields to labor, is not capital entitled to *all* its increase? In fact, if you call a spade one's capital, can you tell me on what principle, according to Mr. George, the worker with the spade and other tools should get as much as a single potato? In fine, does not every fact with which we are daily familiar go to disprove Mr. George's assertions? Does not the reign of this capital capitalize industry itself into outer darkness?

Mr. George having reasoned himself into the belief that interest springs from the vital forces of nature, it was of course a necessary but easy step to find, in the increase of these forces, an increase of interest. And so he sets forth what he calls "a natural balance" between the productiveness of whales and salmon, of rabbits and elephants, of thistles and redwoods. And though there be an equation between the reproductive and destructive forces of nature, as exemplified in the different reproductive powers of these creatures, yet the capitalist has to thank his stars that he gets a bigger slice out of his tenants' pockets for rent of these houses, or the money-lender a rounder sum of money out of labor in return for these thousand dollars lent, because the salmon is good enough to spawn its millions, the rabbit to swarm by the month, and the thistle to float off its seeds on every breeze. Usurers are proverbially shrewd and cunning men. With all their shrewdness they have not yet struck on such a fathomless vein of wealth as is disclosed to them by Mr. George. Little did they think that they had so deep an interest in the preservation and propagation of such things as thistles and rabbits, grasshoppers and potato bugs.

Now, when we read of such notions as these, is it any wonder that I have striven so hard to bring out before the readers of the *IRISH WORLD* the truth as to labor and the source of value? Ought not my definition as to value promulgated in these pages ring forth from every platform where labor can find a tongue?\*

Mr. George, in his fifth chapter, speaks of the division or proportion in which the fruits of toil should be divided between labor and capital. He holds that there must be some point of equation about which the rate of interest must tend to settle, and that there is some natural equilibrium between wages and interest. The idea of capital refers me at once to the tools and appliances of industry. That is the concrete form the idea at once assumes in my mind, and, I suppose, in the minds of workingmen generally. We think of tools in hand; of tools being used and handled; of tools and machinery used by labor during the day's work. It is equally clear, I think, that the idea which occupies the mind of the merchant when he thinks of capital is the power of "credit," or of getting into one's possession the fruits of industry without payment, as represented by the work of banks dealing in paper. It is quite natural that merchants who give no true economic thought to the subject, and who find themselves, by the mere exchange of bits of paper, placed in possession of a currency which commands every product of labor, it is quite natural I say that this spurious notion of capital should so occupy their mental vision as to banish the true conception out of view. I may be mistaken, but it seems to me that this idea has at times full possession of Mr. George's mind. Taking now the industrial idea of capital, and discarding the false and absurd mercantile idea, if this capital (tools, machinery, and all labor appliances) is entitled to all the increase brought about by its use in the hands of the workers, I hold that we are inevitably driven to the conclusion that human labor is entitled to nothing at all under this reign of capital. For, if all the difference in the fruits

\*I may explain that there has been a long and free discussion in the *Irish World* on the question, What is value? between Mr. J. Fairbanks of Missouri and myself, a discussion in which other contributors to the Journal have taken a part. Though we differ as to the economics of the question, it gives me pleasure to bear testimony in this place to the scholarly ability of my opponent, and to the uniform courtesy which has marked his correspondence.

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It springs from to find, in the forth what he and salmon, of re be an equal exemplified in st has to thank rent of these r in return for n to spawn its at off its seeds hen. With all in of wealth as they had so deep as thistles and

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of toil between what men could do with tools and without them be the legitimate reward of capital, on what ground could labor put in a claim for a single iota of the good things produced? If labor had but a hoe in hand, does not the demand of capital begin? And our Author holds that it is a feature of all capital that interest flows to it whether it is borrowed or not borrowed, whether men work with their own tools or lend their tools. Therefore, it is clear that the good matron who knits a pair of stockings has no manner of claim on these stockings. For knitting wires are capital; and no stockings could be made by this matron without her knitting wires, and if the reward fall to the wires, the matron, the worker in the case, has no right either to wear or to sell these stockings. If this be the eternal and economic condition of things, then it seems to me that industry has lost its road entirely, that its presence here is only a nuisance, and that it has no business at all on the face of the earth. The active MAN—the bead sweat on his thoughtful brow—the tool grasped in that wonderful piece of mechanism, the human hand—the thinking, planning, intelligent creature, alive with activity and energy—what business has he in a world where capital is king, and where pulpit and press join hands in telling him that in the councils of heaven this, and nothing else than this, is his decreed and inevitable lot? If all this be true, then ought not industry forever to lay down its tools and cease the struggle? Yes, yes—it is better far to let capital and capitalists do their own work. This new doctrine (for really it is comparatively modern) tells all workers plainly that for them there is no hope—that for them to cast a wistful eye over the magnificent things produced by the arm of industry, and embraced within its mighty empire, would be indulging in expectations never to be realized. It is a dangerous thing to take up with an economic falsity—to yield the reins to imagination rather than to judgment. You will soon know what sort of a tyrant has you in hand, and strange and fantastic is the dance he will lead you. You must be forever hammering imaginary things on imaginary anvils. And as political economy is a many-sided science, and one part must be made to fit with another, you will have to pile error upon error and absurdity upon absurdity without end. It is this unfortunate attempt to find a *raison d'être* for interest and the claims of capital that has led Mr. George, on these points, so far astray.

It is of great importance to keep before us the distinction between loans and labor or economic services. They are not identical. A loan can never be a labor service, and a labor service can never be a loan. The one is a friendly or kindly act, and never can be anything else; the other is something for which another service is exchanged, something embraced within the laws of economic science. They are as essentially distinct as are the acts of loaning and buying. You can never by any possibility convert a loan into what we understand by an industrial service, or into that which is brought upon the market for sale, neither can you convert a service into a loan. Services are exchanges of labor—a loan is not exchange of labor. Services are all within the compass of commerce or exchange, loans are all entirely outside of that compass. You cannot controvert this truth by the fact that the commercial world, aided by the economists, applies the term *service* to all discounting of paper or loans of money. You may say whatever your imagination may suggest about it, but a loan is a loan and can never be anything else than a loan, neither can it ever be brought within the legitimate circle of exchange. You cannot, though all the world concentrate effort upon the trial, alter the deep foundations of economic truth or of nature itself. If you lend your neighbor your wheelbarrow, or your friend in need a hundred dollars, you have rendered nobody an industrial service, you have created no value, you have given no toil. You have done no *service* for which pay can be demanded. You have performed a kindly or friendly act, nothing more, and you have got back *your own, and to the full*, when the wheelbarrow or the hundred dollars are returned. "Lend, hoping for nothing again," contains the marrow of the subject. A service implies labor rendered—there is no labor rendered in loaning your neighbor a wheelbarrow, no *industrial service*. You can never render any *commercial* equivalent for an act of kindness—no more than you can weigh out love by the

pound, or measure off charity by the yard, or patriotism by the bushel. And it does not in the least affect the truth of my argument to say that money loans have so generally assumed a commercial character. Though all the money in creation is lent a thousand times told, it will never make a loan anything else than a loan. If a loan were an industrial service it is certain that there would be a creation of value. But there is no creation of value in loans, and that settles the question at once and for ever. If you try to bring loans within the circle of exchange or upon the field of commerce, then usury and industrial oppression begin their work. *Usury*, that dreadful and destructive principle against which nature, economy and Scripture all equally warn us, springs into existence the moment you attempt to convert a loan into an industrial service for which you claim pay. The friendly act of loaning stands on its own feet—it is a kindly act, that is all—you can never render any industrial equivalent for it—and your kindly act, when your turn comes to lend, also stands on its own feet, and is nothing else than a friendly loan. No commercial or industrial equivalents can be predicated of them. And that all this is true is proved by the fact that you cannot apply to loans the ordinary reasoning as to commercial equivalents. Put it to trial. Begin at the beginning. Take up, and endeavor to compare exchanges of goods or of values, labor for labor, toil for toil, with any law you can fabricate bearing on loans, and you will see how thoroughly you will fail. As to any true laws bearing on the case, the loaning of things can never be compared with the selling of things. All this is also proved by the fact that the vast and entire drainage of interest it taken out of the daily toil of the working world and no equivalent rendered, two facts to which the minds of working men are becoming generally aroused throughout the world. It is impossible you can ever give any equivalent for these loans, for a loan is not an industrial service, and where no service is rendered no service can be claimed. No new code of economic laws will spring into existence at the command of men, either as borrowers or lenders, who thus corrupt at their source those great principles of equity on which all healthful human labor must be built, and by which all human labor should be exchanged. There is but one conclusion to the matter—that from the beginning to the end of time, and throughout every circumstance of human existence, this holds true, *that a loan is an act which can never be brought within the circle of exchange where industrial equivalents are rendered*. Hence usury must ever prove exhaustive of human labor, and hence also the claims of interest fall to the ground.

Mr. George's conclusion of the matter is to this effect: "Thus interest springs from the power of increase which the reproductive forces of nature, and the in effect analogous capacity for exchange, give to capital. It is not an arbitrary, but a natural thing; it is not the result of a particular social organization, but of laws of the universe which underlie society. It is, therefore, just."

My conclusion is: Interest springs from the desires which men have to accumulate without personal toil, or without personally producing, and never springs from the reproductive forces of nature, which are gratuitous to the entire race, nor from the capacity of exchange or the act of buying and selling. It is an artificial and unnatural thing; and is a violation of social rights, of economic organization of society, and of Scripture commands. It takes from toil but never gives. It is therefore unjust.

I feel that no excuse is necessary for this free criticism of Mr. George. I have also in these columns been frequently treated to a free lance. None of us is anything the worse for that, and I do not esteem my critics one whit the less. I think discussion between those who have given thought to these problems must issue in clearer light to all. In Mr. George's book I see an original mind struggling with great truths, a mind open to conviction, for it exhibits not the trace of arrogance. That it contains errors is nothing disparaging when we think of the vastness of some of these problems; of the deep subtlety which has been thrown around them, making that so complicated which is simplicity itself, and of the mists through which the enquirer must grope his way. It is only after mature and careful study that the errors incidental to such a field of enquiry as this will be revealed to the mind. Usury and rent are two things economically immoral; they are the ruin of our

race, and ought not, therefore, to be practiced by our race. The last issue of the one is seen in helpless families and wailing children cast out on the roadside to perish, and which is ripening a vengeance of which I dare not trust myself to speak ;\* and of the other in our sons and our daughters drafted into factory life in their tender years ; in countless millions brought to face a life from which hope and happiness have fled ; and in a world filled with industrial and moral ruin before us every day. Let us have no half work, therefore, with our investigations into these great problems. Let us give them a thorough sifting. Let us labor to bring them into a light so clear that the enemies of industry shall be left without excuse, and without even the shadow of an argument.

\* To show how thoroughly degraded is the so-called public sentiment of the upper classes in England on the land question, involving as it does the national life itself, let me quote the following from the *Edinburgh Review* of Jan., 1881, article "England and Ireland" :—"Would any of these gentlemen hesitate to evict a servant who broke the china or cooked a bad dinner ? Is not every clerk, every shopman, every laborer liable to be evicted from his place for non-performance of duty ?" And who is to evict the landlord or the capitalist when they don't perform *their* duty ? And so this "out you go" argument to a slattern of a cook is good enough, and all that will be offered to the dispossessed people of England, Scotland and Ireland ! A cracked bit of china and the great question of a nation's land and life plumped into the same scale ! But it is not alone the sentiment of the unknown writer in the *Edinburgh Review*—it is the sentiment of the gentlemen of England in their Houses of Parliament, openly published by them to all the world, and of which Kilmainham Jail is at this moment the standing witness. Let us be thankful that it is a sentiment which millions upon millions now understand, and of which they are daily taking full measurement and comprehension. If that Irish bastile were endowed with eyes to see and ears to hear, the ground on which it stands would instantly become its tomb, and it would disappear from the light of day, conscious as it were of its utter degradation in holding within its walls the faithful patriots of the land, and as shrinking under the withering scorn and detestation with which it is regarded by millions of good and true men throughout this great western world, as well as in the United Kingdom itself.

## CONCLUDING PAPER.

## THE GREAT FACTOR IN PRODUCTION.

## THE FALSE AND THE TRUE FOUNDATIONS.—HUMAN LABOR THE ONLY THING ENTITLED TO REWARD.—VALUE THE EMBODIMENT OF HUMAN LABOR.—THE FOLLY OF THE DEMAND AND SUPPLY THEORY.

*(Considerable addition has been made to this paper.)*

It is held by most, if not all the economists, that there are three factors in production—Capital, Labor, and Land.

I hold that there is but one factor in production, Human Labor.

Observe, it is not a question as to the various agencies or forces at work simply as forces, in the raising of all produce or the construction of all commodities. In that respect there are many factors at work, such as air, light, sunshine, land, rain, electricity, water, winds, gravitation, and so forth.

The question is as to the equitable and righteous distribution of the fruits of toil to the factors engaged in the production of these fruits.

In this sense I hold that no reward can be paid, no distribution of products made, to any other factor than to human labor itself.

Land, air, water, and the other agencies noted above, are natural forces, free gifts from the Creator, and placed gratuitously in the hand of every man, to be used by him free of any charge whatever. Any government or any man who steps in between the worker and these gifts or forces, and demands a toll or price for their use, commits a wrong and robs industry.

If land is a factor in production in so far as to entitle it to a share of the product of the toil of the hand, then sunshine is a factor also and entitled to its share. And if this be the case it is beyond question that the producer must travel to the sun and leave with that luminary a portion of his toil. But rain too helps the toiler. He would in fact perish without it. So the toiler is bound to travel to the sea-board and cast some of his earnings into the ocean. For is not sunshine a "factor"? And is not rain a "factor"? And will the economists rob these factors of their just rewards? Out of that sea the productive forces of the refreshing rains may be truly said to arise; and if this natural factor is entitled to its share of the product, then it is plain you must return to the sea that which is its own. And as nobody can claim to own the sea, there is nobody surely to put in a claim to rob the sea of that to which it is entitled.

Therefore, if land claims to be paid as a factor, the sea and the sun are also entitled to claim to be paid as factors.

And so of the claim set up on behalf of capital as a factor. It is equally absurd, if not more so. For it is not a question of the returns for borrowed capital, but it is *capital itself* set forth by the economists as a factor in the case. Land is a factor, they say, entitled to be paid; so also is capital, they say, a factor entitled to be paid. But if this be so, you can no more rob the spade, the plough, the saw, the plane, the ship, the engine, the machinery with which you work, in a word, any form of capital of its share in the product than you can rob the sea and the sun of their shares of the products. The product, in that case, must be left with the tools and appliances just as surely as the product must be left with the sun and the sea. If land, labor, and capital are the three factors entitled to the produce, then it is beyond all dispute that man, who stands in the centre of this triumvirate, can in no circumstances touch more than one-third of the products. If a man who has done no work, and has made no personal effort in the production

of these fruits, steps in and sweeps away the largest portion, then that man, by the verdict of the economists themselves, is sweeping away what does not belong to him, and intruding where he has no right to be. For when man, the middle factor, say the economists, takes his share, he takes it as a laborer, a producer, and on that ground alone. Therefore the conclusion is inevitable that men who have not contributed to the product cannot step in and take away the share of either of the other two alleged factors, capital and land. For if they do so, then capital and land are either not entitled to be ranked as factors in production to whom are to be awarded what they severally produce; or capital and land are being robbed by a "factor" who has no business there. You cannot, on the one hand, escape from the dilemma into which this absurdity brings you—and you cannot, on the other, venture to reason your three factors out of your spurious system, for if you do so your spurious system will fall about your ears. In a word, the economists and their system are thoroughly crucified by their own logic.

Then, owning a bit of land is simply owning a bit of land; and owning a spade or a plough (capital) is simply owning a spade or plough. What more is it? Is ownership production? Does owning an acre of land *produce* a hundred bushels of potatoes? Or does owning a spade or plough *produce* a bag of grain? Are these the fruits of ownership, or of toil? Of toil beyond all question. For I may, by my toil, produce both the potatoes and the grain without *owning* either spade, plough, or land. And as it is true that industry cannot produce more because the tools may be borrowed tools, but rather less, so it is evident that there is no product for either tools as such or for borrowed tools. And where there is no product, it is as certain that there can be no division of product made as that you can make no dinner out of empty dishes.

If capital is an independent factor entitled to its share in the same way as labor is an independent factor entitled to its share, then it is as plain as any demonstration in Euclid that all that I can make over and above digging with my fingers and digging with a spade (the capital) belongs to the spade and not to me. For is not the capital (the spade) in this case the factor in production? And shall human labor, the one factor, rob its brother, the other factor, capital? And when you carry out your logic, what do you leave in the hand of labor itself? *Nothing.*

Mark, then, how the claims of capital run parallel with the claims of landlordism. It is claimed that all that the land yields above what the tiller can produce on the barest soils is rent, designed for landlords, and that the original and indestructible powers of the soil are the property of landlords.

This is sentence of death No. 1, and is addressed to all tillers of the soil.

It is claimed that the returns or reward for capital consists of all that can be made by the use of capital, all the difference between what man can produce with capital (tools, machinery, &c.), and without it.

This is sentence of death No. 2, and is addressed to all laborers, artisans and tradesmen.

Every one may see that all hope for industry is gone with such terrible doctrines in force. Is there any wonder that labor is everywhere bestirring itself to cast off its chains? Need we now wonder at the struggle men have to live in a world overflowing with the bounties of providence?

Am I overstating the claims of capital? Not by a hair's-breadth.

Capital, if its demands be just, must claim *all* that is produced by its aid. Take the case of a large cotton manufactory, where hundreds enter and leave with only their "hands" owned by themselves. By this doctrine, all that is produced in that factory belongs to capital. Why labor even gets wages, I cannot perceive. For if capital is entitled to all the difference between what is produced by the aid of machinery and without it, it is certain that *the bare hands* could not bring forth any of the products of that factory. And so labor, in the persons of the toilers, has not claim to so much as a rag. And herein lies the secret of labor being *always*, under the reign of capital, kept just at the bare living point.

And so we are again brought back by an inexorable logic from which there is

no escape, to the great but simple truth that the entire produce of toil is for the toiler. So true it is what is comprehended in the words of Scripture, that the earth bringeth forth food *meet for those by whom it is dressed*.

If it be said that machinery is entitled to all its returns as machinery, then nothing but machinery is entitled to touch these returns. And if somebody steps in and says he must have these returns as he owns the machinery, then he is destroying the claim advanced on behalf of capital, and substituting a new claim on the ground of ownership. He first sets up a claim on behalf of capital, and then destroys that claim by advancing a new and different claim on behalf of ownership. And if it be held that capital as capital is entitled to draw from labor, then the claim of ownership can have no existence. And so the capitalist is forced to commit a sort of double suicide in the endeavor to do the impossible, namely, to make dead capital a factor in production.

And so, in name and on behalf of afflicted labor, I grind to powder with their own logic the claims of landlordism and of capital. I simply place the whole thing in their own mill and let it meet its fate.

*A factor in production.* It refers, it will be observed, to *force* in industrial occupation, as something which demands its own share in the products because of force expended. As set forth by the economists, it is something wholly outside of borrowing, or lending, or contract, or ownership. It has no reference to these. It is, they say, a factor as man is a factor. So it is simply an absurdity.

I fear that the economists place capital and capitalists on dangerous ground. I expect that the capitalists will begin to see that by these extraordinary doctrines their friends the economists rule them out of even the shadow of a claim.

Gathering up what has been said, I here lay down three grand foundation-stones in our new temple of industry, premising that by the term human labor I mean every species of work or service rendered by man for which an economic equivalent can be given.

- 1st. Human labor is the only factor in production entitled to reward.
- 2nd. Value is a determinate amount of human labor embodied in a commodity.
- 3rd. Value in exchange is a determinate amount of human labor made over for an equivalent and determinate amount of human labor.

The two last are my definitions of value which have excited so long and earnest a discussion among the correspondents of the *Irish World*. I see no reason to alter or amend them. Of course it is as an economist that I speak of value as within the domain of political economy, as that specific quantity of which economists take cognisance when they treat of the products of labor. Bread and raim are useful, or even it may be properly enough said *valuable*, to the human family, but the characteristics which go to make up these utilities fall within the range of chemistry or vegetable physiology, not of political economy. Some of my opponents have labored hard to overthrow my economic definition as to value by discoursing on this general or outside use of the word value, and a definition given by Mr. Ruskin has been quoted—"value is the strength which anything has to make for life," a learned sort of definition, it may be, for some of the ordinary branches of physics, but utterly absurd and meaningless when applied to the realm of political economy, or to those quantities, the fruits of toil, whose values on every market are constantly expressed in money terms. But, unfortunately, it is in this connection that Mr. Ruskin uses the definition. There is no identity at all between these outside utilities, these efforts or endowments of nature, and that value which is the creation of the human hand. Utilities have a region of their own, and economic value has a region of its own, each distinct and each apart. That value does not spring from the mere act of exchange, from the simple shifting of the locations of two commodities, must be obvious on the smallest reflection. The *giving* of two commodities for each other makes known or brings to light something that is in each. The *something* we are in search of has an existence irrespective of and apart from exchange or the mere act of buying and selling. That which is brought to market, whatever it be, is sold *upon* the market. It is not something which has only a moment's existence in the act of buying, something frailer and more

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evanescent then Jonah's gourd which rose in a night and perished in a night. That it is not the commodities in their mere length or breadth or height or bulk or weight with which the doctrine of equivalents is concerned is obvious, for many very small things are often exchanged for many very large things. What, then, is it that is sold? When a table is exchanged for a couple of dollars, it cannot be bulk or weight which forms the basis of the exchange. It is HUMAN LABOR, including within the term all that skill can produce—a great, ever-present, powerful, and independent factor. True, its rule may be all but destroyed under our present corrupt system of commerce, so that those who do least of labor get most of reward, and a series of phenomena be brought upon the market which evidently obscures the minds of many who have been debating the subject. But the great economic truth, nevertheless, stands there in all its majesty and breadth—that it is this human labor, in all its degrees, which constitutes the value, in all its degrees, of everything bought and sold. We must not let the *corruption* of economic laws obscure our minds as to the *truth* of economic laws. It is not what a thing is worth for utility or for service to our race that determines price, else such a thing as air would be worth an enormous sum—it is the labor value embodied in the article you have to sell which determines price. A mowing machine is a useful article—it, apart from labor or the hand to use it, has no utility at all. One will wait a long time to see it, of itself, mow his fields. In the hand of labor it is brimful of utility.

So it is plain that commodities, as such, possess no *intrinsic* value. It is a solecism for an economist to speak of intrinsic value in connection with them. They have intrinsic qualities; but that which is imparted to them by the hand of toil, *specific quantities of human labor*, can never be identified with such qualities. The only *real value* with which a political economist has to do is that value or quantity which is the embodiment of human labor. When an economist begins to talk about *intrinsic* values you may set it down that, as to value, he has never got hold of the truth at all.

Air, light, sunshine, rain, and so forth, are gratuitous gifts from God. Sometimes they may have a price or value, but never unless they have been manipulated by the hand of toil. Our *object* in putting a window in our house is to obtain light, but the light is free, and therefore cannot have a value placed upon it. You reckon the value of the window, the sash, the glass, the painting, and for these you pay, not for the light. And all this in strict accordance not only with every principle in economic science, but with the Latin derivation of the word value itself.

The words *price* and *value* are often used interchangeably, and may be so used without much harm being done. But there is a distinction necessary to be kept in mind. Price is a monetary term, having reference to the money given or proposed to be given for a commodity. It should always be a true exposition of value, but under our present speculative *regime* it may rise and fall a hundred times a day. The price of a thing is (or ought to be) simply the value expressed in money terms, the different notations of a scale expressing all values. Men often have to take the prices of the market, but under the full conviction of the loss of values.

As a rule, that which it has cost a man in labor to produce, it will cost other men in labor to buy. There is no contest as if one half of the human race stood exclusively in the attitude of producers and the other half in the attitude of consumers. Every producer is a consumer, and every consumer is, or ought to be, a producer. Production and consumption may therefore be treated as relative terms. And in the same way demand and supply may be treated as relative terms, as every man brings to market both demand and supply. For how can a man demand unless he can supply, and how can he supply unless he demands? And these conditions are not falsified because *money* happens to be used in exchange, money not being, as generally supposed, a medium of exchange, but the very thing itself, the product of labor exchanged.

Therefore to tell us, as the English economists generally do, and as some of those who have taken part in the present debate have told us, that values are

determined by supply and demand, or by a compound of human labor and supply and demand, is like telling us that the people are all trying to lift themselves from the ground by their own boot straps, or that the pupils in our schools shall all receive prizes, not as they compete with one another but as each competes with himself. The buyer, when he comes upon the market to exchange his money for goods, does not leave his supply at home—the seller when he comes on the market to exchange his goods for money does not leave his demand at home. There can be no doubt that the general use of money in the exchanges has given rise to this economic heresy as to demand and supply being the source of value, and so far it is a monetary error. Some of the London Reviews have pronounced it "a grand philosophical doctrine." It is an error and a most serious one from beginning to end. It all but reigns among English economists. With this idea as a settled conviction in the minds of the "ruling classes," I say it is impossible that justice can be meted out to the toiling millions. For with such a doctrine holding sway, you make industry the sport of every schemer who can rig the market or corner the necessities of life.

Price is not the standard at which values are exchanged. Price is a monetary term which simply indicates how much money is asked or given for a commodity. It may fall so low as to drive people out of special manufactures—it may rise so high as to all but restrain exchange. All shewing that value is something far deeper seated than price. Human labor is the only standard by which commodities are exchanged, or by which they can continue to be exchanged. Fanciful exceptions and fanciful prices only prove the truth of the rule. In every true market, human labor is continually employed measuring human labor. To the surface thinker, and to only such, this may appear paradoxical. But as length measures length, and weight estimates weight, so human labor measures human labor, and as a pound weight can never be anything else than a pound weight, so a determinate quantity of human labor can never be anything else than that determinate quantity of human labor.

Let us reflect on the impossibility of obtaining reliable data from our present commercial and industrial system on which to construct any truthful definitions of value. For value, under a general system of hired labor, or of labor in general bondage to capitalistic power, is corrupted at its source. From the moment labor now puts forth its hand, this corruption begins. Some of my fellow correspondents have labored hard to construct a system of values out of the strange and ever-changing phenomena of the so-called values exhibited under our present commercial system. It cannot be done, because value, universally corrupted at its source, the hand of toil itself carries that corruption more or less into every commodity, and into all its movements. Hence also the innumerable cases of fanciful and other values unsustained by hardly any labor value at all, whose presence and movements are so apt to lead merely surface thinkers astray, or even to induce them to think that a true system of values can be constructed on such shifting sands.

That labor is the thing virtually embodied in commodities, not one of my opponents in the value discussion has ventured to deny; that it is the thing brought to market and spoken of as value in millions of daily exchanges throughout the world is apparent from every genuine fact and consideration bearing upon the question. If we deny this, we take away the only platform on which we have to stand, we leave ourselves for ever at sea, and our search for any other principle of value will be as fruitless as it will be vain.

It is only when we enter upon the region of the market that the deep and great significance of my definitions as to value become fully apparent. They command every man to render a strict account to industry for the prices he lays upon all commodities passing through his hands. If he adds a price he must embody a value equivalent to what he adds. *He* must, not another. These definitions explain the phenomena of the markets under our present false and corrupt *regime*, with the ceaseless and disconcerting fluctuations of prices—fluctuations which constitute the paradise of the commercial gambler, but which are at all times the bone, and very often the ruin, of the honest manufacturer. And it is because the

truths embodied in these definitions are so studiously concealed from the toiling millions, that commercial gambling and license now ride rough shod over industry, equity and righteousness. That industry will one day practically enforce these definitions is to me beyond all doubt. They will yet reign because they are true.

Some have sought to belittle our debate as to value, on the ground that it involves matters of no great consequence. Those who say so have taken but poor estimate indeed of the range and bearing of the stupendous problems of political economy, this among the rest. Such an enquiry as this as to value may be pastime to some minds—to deep and reverent thinkers, those who never trifle with great themes, it presents itself as one of the most important labor problems calling for solution. Those who know anything of the mental conflict amidst which great truths are born, are never the men to treat truth with levity or indifference.

Before these definitions, every false assumption of value in relation to human labor and its products must give way. They are corner-stones of the new economy which is destined to bear rule over all the earth. On these we may safely build the entire superstructure. They furnish an infallible test as to the presence of value, and as to the true equivalents in every exchange of commodities. Every product of labor, from beginning to end, from its creation to its consumption, will call for the application of that test in respect to every hand laid upon these products, and in respect to every claim put forth for payment by those who handle the goods of industry. With that test applied, what a clean sweep will be made of the endless robberies and exactions of the false economy which now prevails! These great truths can never be practically enforced until they are brought prominently out before the minds of men. To what extent I have succeeded in doing so the reader must judge. In his hands I leave them, under the conviction and assurance that they are truths which shall remain as long as man continues on earth to fabricate a commodity or to till the soil.

Montreal, June, 1861.

THE END.